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KISS AND TRY.

A Tale of St. Valentine.

'I won't marry for money, and I won't be married for money, and I won't marry at all; and when I do, I'll please myself—so *there!* You are so stupid, aunt Jane;' and the wilful little beauty stamped her foot, contradicting herself with a wrathful energy that would have done credit to an accomplished actress.

'My dear—'

'Don't "my dear" me! I'm not your *dear*. I can be *dear* to plenty of people if I choose.'

'My dear, really you are so impetuous, you'll never be married.'

'There it is again, that hateful topic. Can't you understand I don't want to? Why should I? I've got plenty of money; I've got a carriage, and two such pets of ponies, and a hunter, and a house in the country; what more do I want? I wish you would all let me alone. There's papa talking sorrowfully, silly old darling, about his declining years, and only me, and *me* not married; and if you are my aunt it's no reason you should worry me night and day. I *won't* have your lawyer if he's as rich as Croesus—how much has

he given you to plead his cause, eh?'

'You need not insult me, at all events. I counsel you for your own good, Miss Delaselle. Mr. Marshe is a most eligible person, most eligible. His father is in the front rank of his profession, and immensely rich; your papa approves of his suit. There is a possibility of the dormant peerage being revived in the favour of that family: Mr. Marshe senior has rendered great services in high quarters.'

'Thank you for your genealogical particulars. Now please tell me all about Captain Williams, and Theophilus Bishop, who will rise in the Church, and Sir Cornelius Wilkes, and Squire Thompson, and Mr. Burnaby, and Lieutenant Vane, and Lord Pauline, &c.'

'Really, you may well pause; the flirtations you carry on are beyond all belief. There were a dozen soldiers in the house yesterday.'

'And there'll be two dozen to-night, and I shall have at least a hundred valentines to-morrow morning. Everybody likes me; of

course they do. All the men know I don't try to trap them into marrying me, like the other girls. Ah, there's a ring; sure to be somebody to see me.'

'Shameful!' groaned aunt Jane, composing herself to her work.

Marie glanced in the mirror over the mantelpiece, smiled, and adjusted a stray curl.

'Aunt, don't you think I look awfully nice this evening?'

'Charming!' said a gentleman's voice, as the door was thrown open, and Mr. Marshe was announced. 'Pardon me, that dress is perfection.'

'Sir, I do not like personal remarks; they are extremely rude. However, your profession, I suppose, brings you into contact with vulgar people.'

'Marie!' reproachfully from aunt Jane.

'Miss Delaselle is privileged,' said Marshe, a dapper young man, not bad-looking, but obviously conceited. Marie said all little men were vain; and as for lawyers they seemed to consider it the duty of heiresses to marry them.

'What divorce case are you engaged in now, sir?' she asked.

'We do not undertake that class of work,' said Marshe loftily.

'Captain Williams—O, and Lord Pauline too! I am delighted to see you. We have been so dull this evening, have we not, aunt Jane?'

These new-comers hardly acknowledged the lawyer, who on his part surveyed them with intense scorn. 'Neither of them has a hundred pounds' cash,' thought he to himself, 'and yet such airs.'

Marie, however, was much more pleasant in her manner to them, which galled him extremely, yet he could not tear himself away; and after twenty times resolving

never to speak to her again, he had actually opened a tacit understanding with Mr. Delaselle.

She was, indeed, one of those girls of whom it may be justly said that there is no living with them nor without them.

He turned to pay court to aunt Jane, when the Rev. Theophilus Bishop arrived. He was acting for the present as a curate in town, till a valuable living, in the gift of a relative, should become vacant by the decease of the aged incumbent.

'You cruel man!' said Marie; 'I heard of your sermon; so, if a poor lady is deserted by her husband and gets a divorce, she is not to marry again?'

'We are opposed to such unions on the highest grounds, my dear Miss Delaselle. If we had only known that a divorcee was one of the contracting parties, we should have most certainly refused permission to use the sacred edifice.'

'Well, it's very hard. Don't you think so, Mr. Marshe?'

'To refuse would be illegal,' said the lawyer, glad of a chance of putting down one of his rivals, 'quite illegal, I feel sure, to say nothing of the bad taste.'

'By the ecclesiastical law—' began the curate, firing up in a moment.

'It's a confounded shame,' broke in Captain Williams.

'The ladies are deserving of every consideration,' said Lord Pauline, an aged *beau*, but well preserved. 'You may be sure the lady was the injured party.'

'Ecclesiastical law—' repeated the curate.

'Suppose it was me,' said Marie; 'suppose I had a brute of a husband—of course I never mean to have one, that's understood.'

'The premises are very lucid,' said the lawyer sarcastically.

'And—and I was divorced. 'Mustn't I—have—well—'

'You of course would be an exception,' said the curate; 'but as a rule such marriages are even more sinful than those contracted simply with a view to filthy lucre.'

This was a cut for Marsha.

'I hate women who marry for money,' said Marie; 'there's nothing so despicable.'

'Nothing so despicable,' echoed Captain Williams and Lord Pauline, neither of whom had a 'dollar.'

'Except a man's marrying a lady for her money,' added the curate, who was well provided for as far 'as the good things of this world went.' 'There should be a certain equality of position and of pecuniary means in order to insure mutual respect.'

'Mutual respect be hanged!' muttered Captain Williams, in his beard.

'What did I hear?' said the curate; 'the language of the barrack-room—'

'I say a girl that marries the man she loves is the truest and the best,' cried the captain loudly; 'whether he's poor or rich doesn't matter. She's the girl for me.'

To his surprise the captain caught Marie's eye fixed on him with an expression of sympathy that made his heart give a thump of delight. Could she? He was not such a bad fellow, this captain, though a trifle outspoken.

'I differ from you entirely,' said Lord Pauline. 'I think nothing shows a more cowardly character than for a man without a penny and without social position—this was a hint at his own title—to attempt to obtain the affections of a lady who might engage herself to great advantage.'

'Lord Pauline understands the world and human nature,' said

aunt Jane. 'His remarks are very just. O, good evening, sir;' with a marked emphasis on the 'sir.'

Marie merely bowed in a distant manner to the gentleman who had at that moment entered, and turned quickly towards the piano. They all crowded round her, and pressed her to play, scarcely deigning to exchange salutations with the new-comer, who was thus as it were excluded from the circle—except Captain Williams, who welcomed him cordially.

"'Tis poverty parts good company," whispered he, quoting the old song. 'Never mind, old fellow; you're twenty times more a man than these miserable drum-stick imitations. By Jove, what a chest you have!'

Thurstan Baynard was indeed 'a man of inches,' and broad in proportion—perhaps rather more than in proportion—though he had hardly yet reached his full development, being but twenty-six. A long silky black beard, thick curling moustaches, bright dark eyes, an open wide forehead, and rather massive head, gave him no inconsiderable claim to be called handsome. Thurstan was one of those men, sometimes met, who seem to possess every possible advantage except money. He was tall and strong, certainly good-looking, agreeable in manner, well read, and still better travelled—he had, for a time, carried despatches as a Queen's Messenger—full of animal health and naturally joyous temperament, saddened, however, by the perpetual sense of impecuniosity and the pressure of petty debt. His family was well connected, of ancient descent, and yet practically he was a vagabond upon the face of the earth. The families of Baynard and Delaselle were branches of the same stock; he and Marie had played together

as children, and he was still free of the house; but when growing years seemed to threaten the danger of an imprudent attachment, Mr. Delaselle spoke to him in private very seriously on the matter, 'hoping that he would not take advantage of his position to compromise Marie's chances of an eligible match.' This was extremely bitter to Thurstan, whose proud spirit was deeply wounded; and henceforward he came rarely, and adopted a deferential distant manner.

Marie, on her part, scarcely noticed him now that they were arrived, he at manhood and she at womanhood. He thought it was pride; still he felt constrained to call occasionally, for in truth he loved her beyond expression.

Nothing destroys a man's spirit like poverty, especially if he still by birth belongs to that class of whom it was said *noblesse oblige*, and cannot fully descend to the little meannesses too often compulsorily practised by those who earn their daily bread. There were as yet no lines upon his forehead, but there was an indescribable expression of subdued pain.

'I've come to say good-by,' said he to Captain Williams, as the two sat together in the back-ground, while Marie played and sang gaily. Mr. Delaselle just nodded as he entered, and then devoted himself to Mr. Marshe.

'Where are you off to, then?' asked the captain. 'Why on earth don't you go into the army?'

'Can't afford it—and can't live on thirteence a day either. No; I'm going to China; you know I've studied fortification. I've an idea I could help them to fortify themselves against the Russians. They are much alarmed at Russian aggression eastwards. General Kauffman's guns easily smashed up the wretched walls

and towers of the Central Asian Khana. I think China ought to pay well for instruction how to build redoubts *à la Vauban*.'

'It's not a bad idea; but how about leaving Miss Delaselle? I thought you were— Well, no matter; you're just the man for her. Yes, I'll say that even against my own interest. She'll be snapped up before you get back, man. Look at Marshe, and that prig the curate, and the old lord—pah! Are you sure *she* doesn't care for you?'

'She scarcely acknowledges me,' said Thurstan. 'And yet we used to— Still she has a right to do as she pleases. At all events, I start to-morrow night for Southampton from Waterloo Station—'

'I'll see you off. By Jove, I'm sorry, deuced sorry! The best fellows are always shoved into a corner. To-morrow night—it's St. Valentine's-day to-morrow, now I think of it.'

Just then Marie's voice, blithe and rich in tone, began with an inimitable expression of innocent mischievousness, so to say, the old verse:

'A' the lads they look at me,
Coming through the rye.'

'It's just like her,' said the captain; 'and yet do you know, Thurstan, I believe there's something good in that girl despite all this frivolity. I wish you could have seen her just now when they were discussing marriages for money, and I said the best and truest girl was the one who married for love. There was a flash in her eye—I don't think she knows her own heart yet.'

'Mr. Baynard,' cried Marie suddenly, from her seat at the piano, 'come and sing our old favourite, "Annie Laurie."'

The circle sneered at the mention of so simple a ballad. He hesitated; but she insisted, and

finally he sang it—sang it as only a man could do who *felt* every line. It was true that she had never pledged her word, but she was indeed 'all the world' to him. He had a beautiful voice, bell-like, yet liquid, and, to alter just one word of Byron,

'Love hath not, in all his choice,
An arrow for the heart like a sweet voice.'

They were all silent when he ceased. Marie indeed seemed to recover herself with an effort, and thanked him gently, in a tone that nearly unmanned him.

'Dear me!' cried the lawyer; 'I've forgotten I had a telegram to leave at the office. Excuse me. I'll return.'

Mr. Delaselle accompanied him to the door.

'Something very despicable in business,' said Lord Pauline.

'Very despicable, very,' echoed the curate. 'Contact with the coarser natures who seek the aid of the law must naturally react upon those who listen to their revelations.'

'I believe there is a great fire,' said Mr. Delaselle, reëntering; 'let us go up to the high windows to see.'

The gentlemen and aunt Jane, who had a special horror of fire, followed him quickly; and Marie was moving in the same direction, when Thurstan, who had stood aside to let the others pass first, spoke her name gently.

She paused, and for the moment they were alone.

'Yes,' she said kindly.

'I—I just called to say good-bye; I start for China to-morrow night—some years before I may see you again,' said Thurstan, in a hurried and confused manner.

'Is this true?'

'It is, indeed, quite true. You will remember me sometimes, Marie?' he almost said 'my darling,' but his courage failed.

Her eyes fell; she flushed slightly.

'Yes, I shall remember you. Stay, let me think—hush! Is it a fire?' she added, in a different tone, hearing footsteps.

'At a great distance; no danger,' said Mr. Delaselle. Aunt Jane glanced suspiciously from Thurstan to Marie, and back again.

He felt that he was looked on as *de trop*; and confused, believing too that to stay longer would be simply to prolong his torture wished them good-night, and left what he had almost nerved himself to say to Marie still unsaid, and now probably beyond his power to say.

A certain stiffness fell upon the party, and Marie seemed to have lost her gaiety, till in less than an hour Marshe returned, and she brightened up, to the great delight of aunt Jane and Mr. Delaselle, who saw in this a sign of affection for him, and were reassured.

Marshe was very lively. The fact was he thought he had done a clever thing.

It was this. Driving to the office of the firm, Marshe, Marshe, & Copp, he recollected that he had a valentine in the pocket of his overcoat. It was a very expensive one, which he had selected with much care, containing a few love verses of the approved order, surrounded with a gorgeous design, and perfumed. He argued with himself *pro* and *con*, after the manner of the judicial mind, as he drove along, whether he should address the envelope himself in his own proper handwriting, or whether he should disguise his style, or get some one else to assist him. This highly important question has agitated the hearts of valentine senders ever since the graceful old custom began.

Clearly, if directed in his own handwriting, Marie, who knew it

well, would recognise the sender immediately; of mystery there would be none, and the fun would be lost.

If the address was written by a stranger it was ten chances to one that she would never fix upon him, in which case the valentine might as well be thrown in the fire at once. What was to be done? A Frenchman would say that the answer to this apparently trifling question decided his destiny. It was still open when he reached the offices of the great firm, in which his part was really merely nominal. In these vast businesses each partner has one department to himself, and perhaps scarcely ever hears the name of the clients of the others; this young man, pert and fashionable in his ways, thought no more of his profession than was absolutely forced upon him. They were working very late that night; his father was sitting still, getting up a matter for a parliamentary committee—the telegram he had forgotten referred to this.

'Ah, Jones,' said he to a confidential clerk who had a room to himself, a kind of antechamber to the great man's, 'just put this letter in a large envelope, one with the firm's initials on,—only the initials, mind,—and direct it with the type-writer to Miss Delaselle, * * * *, Mayfair. Have it ready for me.'

In this way he thought he had conquered the difficulty. The writing-machine really prints exactly like type; but the initials would leave a clue to guess by. Clever young man!

Jones, so soon as his back was turned, smiled, and smelt the letter. 'Aha!' thought he, 'I'll have a look: it's a valentine; I can smell the perfume.'

The envelope was but just stuck; he loosened it, and pulled

out the valentine, laying it on a long letter he had just finished with the machine. Hardly had he taken a peep when the door opened again, and Marshe stood in the opening—still, however, with his back turned—talking to the principal. In an awful fright, Jones upset all his papers, crammed the valentine and the long letter hastily into envelopes, and wrote the directions like lightning.

'That will do—capital!' said Marshe, taking the valentine. 'It's rather an awkward-looking parcel, though. Give me that other letter; I'll send them both to post by the boy as I go down-stairs.'

He dashed back rapidly to Marie, who, as soon as he arrived, became as merry as ever, and raised his hopes exceeding high. When the evening closed, Marshe thought to himself, 'She has evidently come round. I'll strike while the iron is hot, and put the question to-morrow night. By the bye, that ill-favoured Thurstan I hear is off to Hong-Kong. Glad of it; always had a lurking suspicion there was something between them.'

Who, in all great London, should have been so happy as Marie that night! Rich, fêted, with crowds of admirers, and sure to have a hundred valentines next morning!

Would any one have believed that she never slept all night, but passed the weary hours, thinking, thinking, thinking, and frequently shedding tears. Till Thurstan was about to leave her, in all human probability for ever, she had never known how much she loved him. Indeed, she had hardly ever felt that she had a heart; life had been one long round of joyous frivolity. Now she knew the utter nothingness of all the nicknacks of wealth. Of what use were dozens of ad-

mirers if he was not there? She remembered Captain Williams's blunt declaration that the best and truest woman was the one who married for love. Poor Thurstan had not a penny. Some of these men who courted her had shown such bad taste as to describe the shifts he was sometimes put to; instinctively they felt he was a dangerous rival, and thought to hold him up to contempt.

'I *know* he loves me,' she said to herself; 'why has he never said so? It is this money; he is too proud to have me think he woos me for my money. To-morrow I shall lose him for ever.'

From sheer exhaustion she fell asleep at last, and was awakened by her maid, who brought a salver to her bedside, perfectly heaped up with letters. Here were the hundred valentines!

Scarcely twenty hours before she had looked forward to this moment with delight; now she pushed the heap away as a vanity and vexation of spirit.

'Perhaps Thurstan has sent one,' she thought presently, and turned them over, seeking the well-remembered handwriting. 'No, not even a valentine; very likely he is too poor to buy one that he thinks good enough for me. What is this thick letter? What curious writing! It's printing, I think.'

Curiosity impelled her to open it. She read and read, and a colour rose in her cheeks.

'Is it possible!' she cried, and sprang up. 'I'll do it! I *will*! I don't care!'

Hurriedly she wrote a note, and despatched it to Thurstan's chambers. A bold thing doubtless; but reflect, they had been play-mates. It ran thus:

'Miss Delaselle and Mr. Delaselle would like to see Mr. Baynard early in the day, that they may

wish him farewell. They will feel much hurt if he does not come.'

'Good Heavens!' she thought, 'if it should not reach him; if he should not come!'

Thurstan, indeed, did hesitate, feeling that to see her again would be a severe trial. But love, all-powerful love, would not be denied. He went. She had so arranged that he found her alone in her boudoir.

'It's extremely rude of you, sir, to force me to write to you.' Now he was there, she could not resist the temptation to play with the mouse she had caught. 'Why did you not tell me before that you were going?'

Thurstan, unhappy and down-hearted, could not meet her light tone with answering raillery. He stammered some excuse.

'And *why* are you going, sir?'

'I must obtain a living somewhere.'

'Why not in England?'

'The competition is so great. And everybody despises me because I am poor.'

'Stanny,' said she, using an old familiar abbreviation, and placing her little hand on his broad shoulder, 'Stanny, you're a big man—a giant—and O, so strong; can't you push your way in the crowd?'

'I've tried,' said he simply.

'No, you haven't. I tell you what, Stan—I'm not afraid of you, though you are so big—you're a coward! There—O, don't flash your eyes at me! You're afraid, and so you are running away. You'll cry next, I suppose' (this was very cruel, Marie, bitterly cruel). 'You're not half so brave as I am. Men are not half so brave as women' (her voice sank lower, and she looked at him, and her eyes suddenly filled with tears, though he, gazing away, did not see it). 'Do you know what I should do if I were in your place?'

Something in her tone made him glance at her with a strange sensation in his throat.

'What would you do if you were me?' he said.

'Kiss and try,' she whispered softly, letting her head droop against his shoulder.

He did it. There are no words by which so sudden a revulsion of feeling can be described. The half-hour that followed was the happiest in his life. Suddenly he remembered himself.

'I am so poor,' he said. 'Forgive me—they will say it was your money.'

'Are you sure you are so poor?' she said archly.

'Quite sure.'

'Then read that,' and she put Marshe's valentine into his hand.

He tried to, but he could not take his gaze from her; and the letters seemed confused.

'Listen,' she said, and read it. Slowly the truth dawned upon him. Jones, the clerk, in his hurry, fearing to be caught peeping, had put the letter and the valentine in the wrong envelopes, or rather confused the addresses. Marie got, instead of a valentine, a long letter from Copp, the second principal of the firm, which had been really meant for Thurstan. The valentine went Heaven knows where. Of course, how it happened was not found out till afterwards, but there was no mistaking the contents of the letter.

Copp in formal phrase informed Mr. Thurstan Baynard that by the terms of the will of General Sir Frederick Baynard, just deceased—a distant relation who had never previously owned him—he was entitled to a very large sum in consols, and still more valuable estates; *provided*—ah, whenever was there a blessing without a black side (!)—*provided* that within the space of twelve

months he married a lady possessed of not less than a given amount, upon whose children the whole was to be settled. The old man was a miser, and it had been the work of his life to rehabilitate the fallen fortunes of the family. Casting about for a means of keeping the money he had painfully amassed in the family, he had hit upon this odd but not unreasonable idea.

'So you see,' said Marie, 'you're richer than I am. Perhaps you won't have me now?'

His answer was a fresh embrace. 'Ah,' she said, mocking his previously mournful tone, 'I'm so poor now compared to you, you'll think it was your money.'

'Incorrigible,' said he, kissing her.

'Incorrigible, indeed,' cried aunt Jane, who had entered unseen. 'This really is shameful—most ungentlemanly.'

'He is richer than—everybody,' said Marie, laughing. 'This is the most beautiful valentine I ever had.'

'And this is the most beautiful one I ever had, or ever shall have,' said he, laying his hand on her shoulder with an air of possession that horrified aunt Jane.

Matters, however, were soon explained, and her objections melted away, as did Mr. Delaselle's.

They were married early in May, Captain Williams being Thurstan's best man.

'I was certain she loved you,' he said. 'I can understand now what she meant on St. Valentine's eve when she looked at me so meaningfully, when I said the best and truest woman was the one that married for love. She loved you when you were poor. You ought to be grateful to St. Valentine all your life!'

RICHARD JEFFERIES.

DRAWING-ROOM AMUSEMENTS.

PART II.

THIS part will be found to contain the more simple games suitable for drawing-rooms. It does not include, by any means, the whole of them, for their name is legion; but contains a selection of the best—indeed, of all those which are distinguished by anything like an idea—and some which are not generally known, but which have been fished up from the recesses of Scotch and French country houses, where they most do flourish. There are many of the games coming under this division which scarcely require a detailed description, but which are nevertheless well worthy of mention. Such is the time-honoured and ever-delightful battledore and shuttlecock, which I recommend my readers not to play in a hall where valuable china vases are standing about. Neither can it be played out of doors, unless it be upon the stillest of summer afternoons, when the breezes are hushed, the tree-tops tranquil, and the lawn quite dry. Let not two of the same sex either venture to think that they can adequately pass their time by a devotion to this exciting pastime; but let sweet seventeen, with a *robe courte*, looped up just high enough to show the twinkling feet, be matched against valiant twenty in knickerbockers, and it will be found capable of furnishing amusement for hours in its most simple form; or if this be insufficient, let a line on the ground be drawn, on either side of which the two players shall stand, and let that one who

allows the shuttlecock to come to the ground on his or her side be condemned to pay a forfeit, of which the nature may be previously determined, and which may vary from an engagement to give the opponent 'what you like,' downwards; or let a cord be stretched across the room, somewhat higher than the heads of the players, and let them keep the shuttlecock up over it, every stroke below being counted as foul, and visited with forfeits. If the amusement is then found to flag, it must be set down to the natural incompatibility of the players, and they had better resign the battledore to more sympathetic hands, and seek for themselves pastimes which can be practised otherwise than *quand on est deux*. Bilboquet, ungracefully and disgracefully known in England as 'cup and ball,' may in such a case be tried, and presents the advantage of enabling the player to make the heaviest bets with himself as to the number of times he can catch the ball on the spike without the necessity of having to pay them; but it may be found to pall upon the taste after a time, as being somewhat monotonous, and, if so, the Princess of Madagascar's egg may be tried. This pastime had its origin in a tragedy which caused the death of a Madagascan princess, who flourished shortly before the Selika introduced to the European public in the 'Africaine.' This young lady, then a simple commoner, had made (as they do in that country, where the males are in a minority) a vow, after the manner of the European paladins,

to prove her devotion to her lover, who was a prince of the blood royal, by performing any task he might impose. Anxious, like all wise young men, to keep his freedom, yet not wishing to discourage the dusky fair one, the young prince prescribed that she must 'catch her breakfast before she ate it.' As the commoners of Madagascar are not allowed by law to eat anything but eggs, she was at first confounded, but, with true woman's wit, she pulled a slender cane from the ground, bent the end of it round, so as to form an oval, slung her eggs at the end of a piece of cord fastened at the middle of the cane, and so throwing them in the air, caught them upon the oval with the greatest dexterity, which so annoyed the prince that he married her, to save his honour, and immediately afterwards cut his own throat. The instrument which the unhappy princess had invented still survives, a monument of true love, and may be made to furnish much amusement, from the variety of different ways in which the egg (which in these days is of course a sham one) may be caught. The triumph of effecting a good catch over the shoulder, followed by a circular catch on the reverse side, is generally considered sufficient to repay hours of fruitless devotion; and to those who share this opinion in any degree the amusement is much to be recommended. Solitaire is another game which may be played alone. For this it is necessary to possess a board, one of which, however, is in the present day to be found in most houses where games are at all in favour. This board is generally indented with thirty-three holes, forming four contiguous squares, and in each of the holes there is a glass ball. One of these is first removed, and the rest taken off one by one by

hopping over each with the ball next to it, an operation which of course presupposes the existence of a vacant hole next beyond for the hopping ball to go into. The ball hopped over is thrown out, and the object is to take all the balls off the board in this way but one, which will be found to be a task infinitely more difficult than it appears. As the fun of the thing consists in finding out how to do it, I give no directions beyond this—that it is perhaps wise to begin by removing the centre ball, and perhaps not. If any young lady is in doubt as to the fidelity of the gentleman who has flirted with her the most assiduously during the last three months, and is yet too bashful to seek an explanation or hear vows from the gentleman himself, let her in solitude resort to 'L'Oracle de la Marguerite,' which consists in picking the petals from off the little white flower so called, repeating, at the same time, 'Mon amant m'aime,' 'un peu,' 'beaucoup,' 'passionément,' 'pas du tout,' plucking a petal at each qualification of the state of her lover's affection, until she comes to the last petal of all, and the word which falls upon that will give her the exact measure of the extent to which she is loved, wherewith I trust she may be so far satisfied as to forbear seeking its confirmation further. In passing, too, I can give a good word to Patience, which has, like the oracle above described, the advantage that it is capable of being played alone. It is, however, a game of such infinite variety that it is useless to do more than mention it, and to say that it is played with packs of small cards called patience cards. There are as many ways of playing it as there are of reading Abracadabra, and those who would study it thoroughly must be referred to the many special works on the subject.

GUESSING PROVERBS.

This is a game suitable to all capacities, and therefore to be recommended to all companies. The party being assembled, one of them leaves the room, and the rest choose a proverb, the words of which must be equal in number to the players who are left. Suppose, for instance, that there are seven persons, and that the proverb chosen is, 'A cat may look at a king,' one word is allotted to each person, and the victim is then introduced. He is allowed to ask any question he pleases of each of the players, and the person addressed must, in making answer, introduce the word which has fallen to his or her share. The object is so to introduce it that it shall not be picked out of the sentence by the victim, and this with some words is a matter of no small difficulty. In the proverb above given, for instance, the first person would have an easy time of it, being only concerned with 'A,' which useful article is capable of being introduced without forcing into almost any answer to any question in the English language. But it is by a judicious management of the easy words that the victim is most readily misled. Perhaps he may ask, 'What is the time by your hat?' Let not the person addressed be content with answering, 'That is a question I cannot answer;' but let the reply be something of this sort, 'I cannot spare time to resolve a mathematical problem;' upon receiving which, the victim will inevitably be caught by the word spare, and will settle in his own mind that the proverb is, 'Spare the rod and spoil the child.' This sort of misleading of malice prepense is ungenerous, perhaps, but quite fair, and makes the thing easier for the second person, who has to introduce the crucial word 'cat.' The victim may perhaps ask, 'Did you ever see

the Pyramids?' when the difficulty of the case will be apparent, and the player who has to answer will be looked upon as lost. The best way then is to treat the questioner as the pearl-fisher does the shark, confuse him by stirring up the mud; and the answer may be, 'Yes; and in the centre of the largest I came across the remains of a burnt mummy, surrounded by the emblems of the sacred crocodile, rhinoceros, horse, ostrich, alligator, cat and dog, and white bull, and surmounted by an inscription, stating that Rameses the Six Hundred and Forty-first had died of a *stitch* in his side.' The victim will scarcely make anything out of this, for he will be confounded by the presence of the elements of several common proverbs, and the cat will in all probability escape him, while 'stitch' is very likely to catch his attention. Puns on the words of the proverb are allowable, provided they are quite fair as regards similarity of pronunciation between the words punned upon. If, for instance, the next question asked is, 'How do you like potatoes?' the person addressed may introduce his word by answering, 'I like them well enough from the last day of April to the first of May, baked, but not burnt, and above all, mealy.' Here are some English and French proverbs, the latter being for the benefit of those who choose to play in that best of all languages of society: 'Once bit, twice shy;' 'Never look a gift-horse in the mouth;' 'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody good;' 'Least said, soonest mended;' 'Wilful waste makes woful want;' 'A burnt cat dreads the fire;' 'Dis-moi qui tu hantes, je te dirai qui tu es;' 'Qui terre a, guerre a;' 'Péché avoué est à moitié pardonné;' 'Rira bien qui rira le dernier;' 'L'eau va toujours à la rivière;' 'Qui ne sait dissimuler, ne sait régner.'

THE STOOL OF REPENTANCE.

This is usually played thus: One person being sent out of the room, another, who acts as public prosecutor, goes round the circle, and invites each of the company to accuse the absent one of some offence; the more absurd the imputed crime, the better. This done, the culprit is introduced, and the public prosecutor addresses him. 'It is my painful duty to inform you that in this open and honourable court you have been accused of—' here follows the offence imputed. 'Dyeing your hair'—'Conceit'—'Punctuality'—'Modesty'—'Going to sleep in church'—'Wearing green gloves'—'Flirting'—'Writing poetry'—'Believing in compliments' are all good crimes. Having heard the accusation, the culprit makes a short defence of himself against the charge, and winds up by pointing out the person whom he supposes to have made it, as a proof that no credence can be attached to it. If he guesses right, the accuser is in turn sent out and made to sit on the stool of repentance—if not, the next charge is heard until they are all exhausted. The following appears, however, a better way of playing this game: When the culprit has been selected he should be allowed, before leaving the room, to choose counsel, who leaves the room with him. The company will then elect a judge and counsel for the prosecution; the crimes will be named, and the prisoner again introduced. The judge, who must assume a becoming gravity and spectacles, and, above all, must sit in an arm-chair, then states the charge that has been made, and calls upon the counsel for the prosecution, who thereupon rises and makes a speech to prove the commission of the imputed crime. When he has come to an end, the

counsel for the prisoner replies, and, in consideration of his ignorance of the accuser, has beside the right to call three witnesses for the defence from among the company. The rule of evidence is that he is not allowed to examine witnesses with regard to the actual commission of the crime, and any approach to an actual reference to it must be stopped by the judge, or objected to by the counsel for the prosecution. His object, therefore, will be so to examine the witnesses with regard to the circumstances attending the crime or the supposed motive for it, as to discover which of the company could have actually seen it or known it to be committed. When this is done, the judge sums up, the matter is referred to the company as a jury, and if the prisoner is acquitted—as he may sometimes be in consideration of a good defence—the accuser takes his place. If, however, he is found guilty, he is asked what he has to say 'why sentence should not be passed upon him?' and he then makes a guess at his accuser. This method gives an opportunity for the display of much oratory and ingenuity on the part of the counsel and witnesses, and may be made productive of great fun.

THE KING'S COMING.

A bustling game, wherein the least amount of intellectual with the greatest amount of bodily activity is required. The players are all seated but one; that one stands in the centre of the circle and calls out 'Change seats, the king's coming,' upon which every player must change seats with some other, the object of the person who gives the word being to obtain possession of a chair at the moment it is left vacant. This, in consequence of the general confusion, will be found much more difficult than it appears. If, however, the player succeeds in capturing a place, the

person who at the end of all the changing is found to be without a chair takes the place in the centre, and gives in turn the signal for changing. The chief fun of the game consists in the inextricable block which generally occurs in the middle of the circle when the changing takes place. Let me impress upon players the advantage of decision and rapidity, the two qualities which will be found to be chiefly taxed.

QUALIFICATIONS.

In this game the player possessing the most inventive genius writes a story, leaving blank spaces before each noun and proper name which occur in it, and then appeals in turn to each of the company for an adjective until the whole of the spaces are filled up. The tale is then read aloud, and much amusement will probably be derived from the quaint and utterly inapplicable way in which the adjectives come in. For instance, the narrator writes: 'The (metalliferous) Mr. Barkins, walking one (rectangular) day in company with the (calcareous) Bishop of Oxford, met the (straw-coloured) Mrs. Barkins driving in an (empty-headed) barouche, with the (iron-plated) baby, the (kilted) nurse, and the (hypothecated) Queen of Honolulu, whereupon he naturally went to the (dessicated) canal and precipitated his (multifarious) body into the (incongruous) water, which resulted in a most (felicitious) suicide and a (vicarious) verdict of *felo de se*.' The more far-fetched the adjectives the better, since they add the more to the startling nature of the history told.

THE FARRAGO.

This is another form of the same sort of thing, but instead of being written it is done *vivâ voce*, which is so far an advantage. One of the

company is selected to tell a tale, and the rest each choose a trade, such as bootmaker, baker, ironmonger, greengrocer, sailor, silversmith, cheesemonger, &c. The narrator, whenever he requires a noun, appeals to one of the tradesmen, who is bound, under pain of paying forfeit, to furnish one out of the stock-in-trade of his own calling, and those of course come in most incongruously. Thus the narrator begins: 'Sir Ronald the Fearless finding time hang rather heavy on his hands, resolved to go out shooting; and as in those times human life was not held so valuable as it is in these degenerate days, he cared little whether he shot (appeals to greengrocer) cabbages or (appeals to bootmaker) top-boots. In the first place, then, he called his trusty (appeals to sailor) captain's gig, and, the castle being moated, lowered it into the (appeals to butcher) loin of pork, and steered for the (appeals to baker) quartern loaf opposite. He then carefully looked at his (appeals to butcher) ribs, to see that the (appeals to bootmaker) spurs were quite dry, and as the very next moment he chanced to see a (appeals to sailor) forty-gun frigate flying past him at the rate of fifty (appeals to baker) penny rolls an hour, he raised the afore-said (appeals to butcher) liver and lights, fired at it, hit it, brought it down, and then discovered it to be (appeals to sailor) half a ration of grog, though some said it was (appeals to cheesemonger) Cheshire cheese, while the majority maintained that it was a (appeals to silversmith) dozen forks.' The appeals are made by simply nodding to the person addressed, so as not to interrupt the thread of the story, and the result—as will be seen from the example—is more entertaining than comprehensible.

PROUD MAISIE.

CHAPTER IV.

DAUGHTERS OF EVE.

THREE o'clock on the afternoon of the next day. Eva and I were back in our attic again. I knew they were hourly expecting me at home, but was unwilling to move, and lingered, sitting soberly, idle as usual, with downcast eyes, and looking as I felt, inclined to *reverie* and 'divinest melancholy.'

Eva glanced up from her work, and began to sing maliciously,

'In summer time I saw a face
Trop belle pour moi, hélas, hélas !

'Don't,' I interrupted. 'Eva dearest, when you die, if there be any justice upon earth, you will be deified, and have temples set up to you as the goddess of Industry, with a capital letter.'

Not even a fancy-ball, it appeared, could unsettle her quiet mind for a day. There she sat by her easel, painting at a charming little picture of the nightingale making love to the rose, working away with the same care and interest as usual.

'I often wonder,' I continued plaintively, 'if a ball upsets our partners' heads as it does ours sometimes. But everything unsettles me.'

'You are so impressionable.'

'Yes, and I can't think why.'

'Because you're a genius.'

If Eva had said, 'You're a Jabberwock,' I should have been less taken aback by the observation. 'No, that I'm not,' I promptly retorted; 'I can swear it, by Lavater too.'

'Prove it, then.'

'What colour are my eyes?'

'Brown, of course.'

'And genius, saith Lavater, is always associated with eyes of yellowish green. No, dear, my powerful and original mind has found its own level, I fear, after last night's harlequinade, and found it no higher than it should be. I am costume intoxicated. My brain is a whirl of togas and turbans, casques and cowls, odalisques and zouaves, Watteau shepherdesses and Spanish *hidalgos*.'

'And Venetian magnificos. What did you talk about with Mr. Gerard?'

'Not much about the weather, nor of the floor, nor anything in the least frivolous. I found his conversation instructive to the highest degree. We got on the subject of his travels, and I listened whilst he took me round the world with him in about a quarter of an hour. But your wits are evidently past being waltzed or gossiped away. At the same time I perceive a want of expression about that nightingale's eye.'

'How you run on, Maisie! Have you been lunching on laughing-gas?'

'No. Day-dreams, dear—angels' food.'

'Food for human beings to starve upon, then. You're not a chameleon nor a bird of paradise, Maisie, to feed upon air. Until you give up dreaming you will never do anything in the world.'

'Very true. You remind me

of Claude prophesying to Ethel, "You will die after eating that green gooseberry." Day-dreams or none, I shall never do anything particular in the world," said I pathetically; and running off to the piano—that friend in need, that refuge of the destitute which I invariably sought when words failed me to express my feelings—I began to sing an old German *Volkslied*.

‘THE NUN.

I stood on the lofty headland,
Look'd in the deep, deep Rhine;
A boat is sailing yonder;
Three gallants quaff their wine.

The youngest of the gallants,
With eyes so bold and free,
Waves high his Roman goblet:
"Sweetheart, I drink to thee,"

"What dost thou thus to pledge me
With glances free and wild?
Thou art a count, and rich born,
And I a peasant's child."

"Ay, wert thou but a wealthier maid,
A twig of a noble tree,
Hadst name and rank to match with
mine,
Faith, would I wed with thee."

"Nor wealth nor rank are mine to own,
Yet honour dear I hold,
And keep till the lover cometh
Who recks not for name or gold."

"And cometh he never, maiden,
How will it fare with thee?"
"Then in the cloister yonder
The bride of Heaven I'll be."

But here, just half-way through my ballad, I suddenly stopped short, with an unmusical shriek, startled at the sight of a figure in the doorway.

Only an old man. I think he had been standing there, unperceived, for a few minutes already, and he was certainly a very strange apparition.

A small spare figure, with a large head, that at first sight gave something grotesque to his presence. The face was nearly half forehead, the eyes large and heavy, with drooping lids; the head, spread with grayish hair too thin

to hide the almost abnormal development of some organs, was a phrenological curiosity. The features were small and fine, and wore an almost feminine expression of sensitiveness and delicacy, backed, however, by an abundance of nervous masculine force, and a most unfeminine self-reliance.

"Pardon, meess," said he to Eva, speaking with the strongest German accent imaginable, and darting a wrathful sidelong glance at me, affronted, it seemed, at having been mistaken for a goblin. "The purpose of my visit is not to alarm. But I have a *lodge* for the English Opera next Monday, and thought that perhaps you, meess, and Mr. your uncle, might desire to assist at the *début* of your friend and countryman, Theodore Marston."

"What, *Masaniello*?" I exclaimed hastily.

He turned to me severely.

"No, meess; it is as Max in *Der Freischütz*," and almost before Eva could notify her acceptance or express her thanks he had made his bow and exit.

"In the name of all that's wonderful," I asked, impressed, "who is that—man, I was going to say, but he looks more like an electric machine?"

Eva laughed and explained. Her visitor was Herr von Zbirow, a German composer and pianist of some eminence, now on his first visit to England; a gentleman of eccentric habits and habitations, who had lodgings in a lower story of the house, but had been absent for the last two months on a provincial tour.

I listened with interest. I had heard much of Von Zbirow. Who had not? For he was a genius; his worst enemies must grant him that, though they squared accounts by accusing him of

wresting it to his own condemnation. A prophet he might be, but a prophet of Baal.

Eva related how, between him and herself, a peculiar kind of second-hand friendship had arisen. Von Zbirow professed to speak no English, Eva no other language; and they had never met before, except on the stairs. But one day in the spring the landlord's boy came to her with a message from the lodger on the second floor. The gentleman had two small tame owls, which he always carried about with him, to whom he was affectionately attached. The young lady's peculiar talents had been made known to him. Would she oblige him by painting his pets? Of course the young lady consented. Messages were interchanged through the medium of the landlord's boy, with whom the musician had learnt to communicate by signs. Von Zbirow always bowed graciously to Eva now when he met her; but this was the first time he had tried to penetrate into her sanctum.

'It must have been your music that brought him to-day,' she observed.

'Yes, in hopes of putting a stop to it,' I retorted, laughing; 'but that he sha'n't.'

And forthwith I took up the thread of my ballad again where I had dropped it.

'That night, well-nigh half the night
through,
The count slept sad and sore;
He dreamt his love, his heart's delight,
Had pass'd the cloister door.

"Now up and rouse thee, my henchman
true,
Haste hither to my side;
A horse for thee and me—this night
To the cloister we must ride."

And when they came to the cloister,
They knock at the convent gate:
"Bring forth the nun, the youngest
That hither came last and late."

Forth came the maiden slowly,
A snow-white robe she wore;
Gone are the long, long tresses—
"Farewell, for evermore."

The count's heart sinks into silence;
He leans upon a stone;
From his eyes the tears are falling,
From his heart all joy is gone.

She bade him then to pledge her,
To pledge her in his glass:
The glass lies shatter'd and broken—
Broken his heart, alas!

There with her own pale fingers
She dug the count a grave;
On the sod the holy water
From her dark-brown eyes she gave.

With her sweet voice she chanted
Over the grave his knell;
With her fair lips she sounded
The count's last funeral bell.'

'Maisie, you sing better than anybody I ever heard,' said Eva, in her grave way.

'It runs in the family, dear. Claude is already a distinguished amateur on the flute, and Ethel is going to learn the violoncello. You may expect one of these days to hear of the "talented Noel family, in their popular musical entertainment." Talking of whom, I suppose I must go home to them.'

As I left the room I encountered Von Zbirow on the stairs. He shot a look at me which made me stop suddenly, involuntarily, for a moment, as I imagined he was going to speak. He did not, however; and I went on with the little irritated feeling of one who has perpetrated a *gaucherie*. In a few minutes I was in the drawing-room at home, giving a graphic account of the ball to my mother and the twins.

My mother was one of those not uncommon characters which strike us at the same time as a protest against and an apology for the 'subjection of women' as it exists, or existed at least in the last generation. It was grievous, no doubt, to see an intelli-

gent being, in full possession of the ordinary faculties, so ill-trained in their independent exertion as to have lost all the higher use of them, like a prisoner who, kept too long cooped up, loses the full use of his limbs. On the other hand, the most modest and disinterested male that ever stood up for the rights of women might be forgiven for doubting whether, under any conceivable circumstances, Mrs. Noel could have been his intellectual equal at the bar, the desk, in business, the lecture-room, the pulpit, or anywhere else.

Nothing was fixed in her but an amiable shiftiness; nothing determined but indetermination. Weakness of mind seems to claim a certain deference and respect, like weakness of muscle. Not an opinion, not a principle, not a belief of hers but must have fallen helplessly before the first assailant; so people in general chivalrously refrained from assailing them and making her uncomfortable. She had made a love-match in her marriage, against the will of her family, with my father—a clever, handsome, 'feckless' young man, remembered by his friends and contemporaries as the greatest intellectual spend-thrift of their circle; a man whose wit and powers were at every one's service but his own; who frittered away talents and golden opportunities by the score; took a serious fit, orders, and a wife in the space of a few months, and spent his energies for the remainder of his life in a struggle, sad in itself, with poverty, ill-health, and overwork, but gilded by natural high spirits and a sanguine disposition. My mother's marriage was the first and last independent act of her life; but even that had been a yielding to an outer force—the wilful urgency

of her lover, stronger than the mild obstinacy of her parents. She made him a perfect wife to his idea. She acquiesced in everything, fostered his whims, or be-setting sins as sterner folks called them, believed in his wildest hopes, applauded his most luckless plans, and wheeled round with his veering mind as a weathercock shifts with the wind. It was no doubt a very foolish *ménage*, and yet she said—and my early recollections said the same—they did contrive to live very happily for years under trying circumstances that would have thoroughly soured or driven to despair many a better and wiser couple.

He died, and she was inconsolable. But her mind was as incapable of retaining grief as any other impression for very long. Besides, other cares would intrude; and the present with her was always despotic. During my father's lifetime she had neglected us, her children, for him. Now care for the olive-branches had long almost obliterated the past from her memory, entirely from her heart. She was pretty still, like a portrait faded in colour and tone, but intact in the outline, and still took as profound an interest in the mysteries of a ball as any girl in her teens.

My reappearance had been the signal for a storm of questions from her and the twins. I plunged at once into my recital. It was strictly true as far as it went, though cut and revised as I thought fit for family comment. I talked a good deal about Theodore Marston, and was much bantered in consequence by the precocious Ethel. Somehow Jasper Gerard's name was never mentioned once.

'Imagine a room, not large, but a very Aladdin's palace for bril-

liancy, flowers everywhere instead of gems, sparkling with light and colour; imagine the most exquisite decorations of roses and ferns, delicious music, dresses indescribable, but *all* gorgeous and blazing with half the family jewels in London.'

'And Maisie in the middle of it all,' said Claude compassionately; 'poor thing! How mean and tawdry you must have felt in all your theatrical trumpery!'

'How perfectly correct and artistic, you mean,' I retorted. 'Why yes, there were others there who called themselves gipsies, in white-kid gloves; and peasantesses wearing a hundred pounds' worth of rings on their fingers, for fear, I suppose, lest they should be mistaken for anything so vulgar as their originals.'

'Did you get good partners?' asked Ethel.

'I never wish for a better than Theodore Marston; he dances divinely.'

'You've certainly lost your heart to him, Maisie. For shame; an actor!'

'Not quite so bad as that,' put in Claude. 'He *was* a gentleman, it seems, at least till he went on the stage. They're a very good set of fellows at the Treasurer's Office, I'm told. Shouldn't mind entering it myself.'

'Perhaps the Treasury would have you,' I replied witheringly; 'but as for the stage, it would decline you with thanks, I'll answer for that.'

'O, if a man has a really beautiful voice and likes the vagabond kind of life, I don't know why he should not go in for it,' said Claude magnanimously; 'but of course he must take the consequences in society.'

'And it looks rather as if he was no good for anything better,' said Ethel; 'doesn't it, mamma?'

'Yes, dear. Still it is always best in the end to let people follow their own vocation as it is pointed out by their natural gifts.'

'Now look here, mamma,' quoth Claude, 'you know that I have a natural gift for standing on my head and that sort of thing. Would you let me follow my vocation and go in for being a street tumbler?'

Before she could reply I interposed hastily,

'Hush! there's a carriage at the door.'

Ethel rushed to the window. 'Why, it's—it's—it's Hilda Jarvis, Maisie, and you've got your old brown gown on!'

Too true. Despondingly I looked in the glass, and saw 'the day after the revels' all too plainly written there in a dusty, *chiffonné*, hopelessly demoralised something about my reflection. My eyes and colour were unusually bright, but with regard to the dress there could not be two opinions.

'It's lucky I'm averagely respectable,' said Ethel, arranging her gold-green skirts.

I darted out of the room, and presently sailed in again, having added a rose-coloured sash and bows to my toilet with such effect as to confound the twins. The robin had put on its red breast.

It mattered not, however. The visitor's apparel, which Ethel was already pondering in her heart, was of that provoking description which makes any other, old or new, look shabby beside it; such a specimen of perishable nineteenth-century work as might well drive a modern reformer to break out with the very words of Chaucer's honest parson in righteous indignation against 'the superfluity of clothing, which that maked is so dear, to the harm of the people, not only the cost of embroidering, the disguising, in-

denting, or barring, and semblable waste of cloth in vanity, costly furring in the gowns; so much pouncing of chisels to make holes, so much dagging of shears and superfluity of length in the aforesaid gowns.'

The wearer embraced me with effusion. Hilda Jarvis was the eldest daughter of a baronet, for twenty years sinecurist on the Civil List at several thousands a year, highly connected, and with a peerage in prospect. She was young, handsome, accounted clever, the hopeful child of fashion and fashionable parents. Her mother and my father had been friends in youth, and we girls whilst in the schoolroom had for years regularly gone to tea with each other every Saturday afternoon. Thus we grew up nominal friends; familiar, but never intimate. We were really irreconcilables born and bred, though I was but just beginning to be aware of the fact.

'I feel so ashamed of myself, Maisie, for never having been to see you before,' she began, but in a tone as though she were boasting of it. 'I had to go to an afternoon rout to-day, and finding myself up in your neighbourhood thought I would come and pay my long-promised visit, whilst the carriage goes back to fetch mamma from Lady Meredith's, where I left her.'

'Lady Meredith? I repeated.

'Yes. O my dear, she has a fancy dress on view to-day—only to the elect of course—but I was one of the privileged few, and I think the sight will haunt me with jealousy for a week. Such a delightful thing; she wore it last night at a fancy-ball, where I would have given the world to have been. How shall I describe that costume to you?'

'Let me try. Pomegranate-co-

loured dress, open over an embroidered muslin bodice, and with an over-skirt of white gauze; wide silk trousers and richly-worked morocco slippers; small blue-velvet cap embroidered with gold, and pomegranate flowers in the hair,' I rattled off quickly.

'What! even you have heard of it already?'

'Seen ~~it~~, Hilda, and herself in it, the cynosure of a crowd.'

'Maisie, how absurd you are! Do you mean to say you were actually at the ball?'

'That I was;' and I felt a momentary mean triumph.

The twins looked quite proud of their sister; for had not Hilda committed herself to stating that she would have given the world to have been there?

'Ah,' in another tone, 'I heard there was an immense crush. Tell me, was it not rather a mixed affair?'

'I cannot say; I knew so few. Some friends took me.'

'What kind of a place is the Priory?'

'A very curious place; old and picturesque, and full of artistic backgrounds.'

'And the owner?'

'Mr. Gerard?'

'Yes. I have heard a great deal about him that makes me curious. They say that he is so very good-looking and clever, but rather odd and intractable. He's a great "catch," do you know?'

'Mr. Gerard is a tall young gentleman, with blue eyes, upright carriage, gentlemanly manners, dark wavy hair, moustache and beard to match, and a pale complexion. Any young lady who shall succeed in apprehending the same shall receive an adequate reward, did you say, in settlements?'

She laughed.

'Well, he is hardly rich as things go. What is ten thousand

a year nowadays? Lady Meredith would run through it all in no time. Her husband has double; but then he is paralytic. They say Mr. Gerard is in love with her, and that is how the ball came about. A friend brought her this dress from Greece; she wanted to wear it, and teased him and his mother into giving the party. Did you notice anything of it?

'He did take her in to supper,' I replied warily, 'and seemed quite annoyed afterwards when Mr. Marston carried her off.'

Hilda put me well to the question about Jasper Gerard. She was so much more acute than the twins that I had to take refuge under the safe shield of apparent obtuseness. Could not say if he was good-looking; he was in disguise. He might be clever; but what man can be witty at a ball? Had not observed that he was particularly attentive to any one. Hilda, seeing that it was useless to attempt to get anything further out of the impenetrable stupidity of her witness, rose to depart the instant her carriage was announced. As she went towards the door, her eye fell on Eva's little picture of Jock that hung on the wall.

'That's pretty, Maisie. Did you do it yourself?'

'No; a friend of mine. She is an artist—a bird and flower painter.'

'Professional?'

'Certainly.'

'Is she dear?' continued Hilda, who, with some hundreds a year pocket-money, liked to make a virtue of economy.

'Not particularly; but why?'

'Because I've been wishing for a long while to have my parrot's portrait taken; and if she isn't too ruinous she shall do my Poll. I think he's going to die soon, and I want him to be painted first. Good-bye, dear; be sure you come to see me soon.'

And off she went. Claude began to read the *Times*; Ethel and my mother to devise ways and means for a possible cheap imitation of Hilda's rococo gown. As for me, I was wishing, rather rudely, that she had never come. For Hilda, her gown, and her conversation had jarred upon me to that degree that all the divinity was gone from my day's mood past recovery.

CHAPTER V.

MAX.

THE performance of the *Freischütz*, in which Theodore Marston was to make his first appearance before the British public, was given by an 'English' Opera company, of which the principals consisted of three Germans, two Americans, two Italians, and a Swede. This international troupe had for a month or two been playing at one of the leading theatres, with but very limited success. It was confidently hoped, however, that Theodore Marston might prove the making of them yet; an attraction that should retrieve their fortunes, raise their prestige, and tide them over the remainder of the season. As had been expected, his *début* was the fashionable artistic event of the night. For a young man with ecclesiastical connections in high places, and who has scandalised the county town to which his family belonged, by throwing up a certain position and a good appointment in the Civil Service to go on the stage, may still prove a nine days' wonder in London society. Reports from Italy spoke highly of Theodore Marston's B flats, which, before this, had certainly electrified London drawing-rooms. They were now to electrify

London amphitheatres—a very different thing.

That I was to accompany Eva and her uncle to the Opera on the night in question had been settled as a matter of course; and in due time they called to carry me off, Mr. Severn gallantly presenting me with a full-blown white rose, the glory of his garden, which I stuck in my dress accordingly.

The overture was beginning as we entered. Ours was a little box, not far from the stage. Mr. Severn leaned out to reconnoitre, and announced that the house was full.

'And with an uncommonly fashionable-looking audience,' he added. 'Our friend Theodore's in luck. All the world seems to be here to-night, and his wife.'

'And daughters,' I added, suddenly catching sight of the Jarvises in a box opposite.

A perfect family group. Sir John, the heavy father—and a very heavy father too; Lady Jarvis, strong in diamonds and moire antique; and Hilda, a sweet young thing, in virgin white and unsophisticated wild roses, with as many lovers around her as Penelope, and showing no less skill in keeping them at bay.

'Maisie,' whispered Eva, 'guess whom I see in the stalls.'

'Mephistopheles, surely,' said I, 'you look so mysterious.'

'Not exactly. See for yourself; just underneath, in the first row.'

I looked down, and saw the head of dark wavy hair I had so accurately described to Hilda. Mr. Gerard was studying the libretto; but no sooner did my eyes fall upon the crown of his head than he quickly, involuntarily as it were, looked up, straight into our box.

'Young Gerard, I declare!' said Mr. Severn. 'I suppose he's

an *habitué* here. But of course he has come to see his friend's success.'

'Or to be "in at the death," as some one suggested?' remarked Eva. 'I heard that there was a clique against him.'

'Against Mr. Marston?' I exclaimed indignantly.

'Yes; partly a little professional jealousy—they can't forgive or forget the amateur all at once—and partly some private theatrical quarrel. Quite enough to make his friends anxious.'

'O, nonsense,' said Mr. Severn hopefully. 'If there's an opposition Theodore will soon sing it down,' much as he might have talked of walking off a cold.

'Hush!' said Eva solemnly, as the curtain drew up; and we hushed and extended our necks unanimously.

It was a small company, and the scene disclosed a muster of about a dozen Bohemian peasants and as many peasantesses singing, in chorus, their laughing jeering ditty to Max, the unsuccessful marksman, who is seated apart, his head sunk in his hands.

Suddenly he looked up, rose, and walked forwards.

Nature assuredly had cast Theodore Marston for the part of a forester or a franc-tireur in the Schwarzwald or Tyrol. It was a most whimsical fortune that had set him down, like a foundling, first in the well-regulated medium of English country society, and afterwards at a desk in an office. Like many other stage-struck persons, he had probably been drawn to the boards less by pure dramatic instinct than by the restlessness of a being somehow hopelessly parted from his natural calling.

The nearest approach to satisfaction, the best opportunity for the development and exercise of

his wayward qualities, he would find on the stage, where at least he might *act* his own character at times, and give play to humours and impulses that found no outlet in polite, ultra-civilised, modern life.

His appearance, at all events, was a success. Of middle height, well, compact, powerfully built as a young faun; a figure with an Italian suppleness in all its movements; a downright handsome countenance, good forehead, shaded by layers of short curly brown hair, and beneath, those bold, bright, dark, southern, unprincipled eyes. The chorus, as they mocked at him, looked like a pack of silly children teasing some dangerous young wild animal, that at any moment might break loose, startle, and put them all to flight.

A nature with power in it enough and to spare. Physical power, not excessive as in the prize giant or athlete, where an abnormal artificial muscular development so encroaches on the intellect and heart as to reduce them to brutality or insignificance, but a well-distributed activity and nerve. Power to will, hope, dare, act, live, enjoy—in short, an intense personality. The very nature flatly to rebel against the monotonous fret of the commonplace, the rules and measures of society.

But now Max is going to sing, and many tremble for the amateur, the amateur turned professional, prepared by experience for the worst; that is, for some painful exhibition of weakness.

But one and all were taken aback. With an excellent voice, both telling and robust, Theodore Marston was, above all, a dramatic singer. He had that instinct of appropriate expression which half makes up for shortcomings in

finish and execution, and another invaluable gift besides—the art so hard to acquire, but sometimes inborn, of concentrating the attention of the audience upon himself; in theatrical slang, of ‘pulling the house together.’

Max the Freischütz is, as everybody knows, an insufferable nincompoop, even for a tenor; a feeble desponding soul, and a very bad shot into the bargain; always crying over spilt milk, and refusing to do what he begins to set about the very next instant. He has not the spirit openly to defy Fortune. When fair means fail him to secure his prize he falls in with the first suggestion of foul, and no sooner does he find out that he has disgraced himself to no purpose than he cries ‘*Peccavi*’ again. Could there be a more despicable hero? A coward both in virtue and vice.

But our Max to-night is a youth all fire and fury, *bon enfant* in the main, but just now under the sway of an imperious desire. Agatha he loves; Agatha, at all hazards, he must win. For her sake he is ready to dare all the fiends in Tophet; how much more the bats and spiders in the Wolf’s Glen, whither he has to go to forge the magic bullets which insure him victory?

And so on throughout the whole scene in the haunted gorge. His horror, sufficiently well acted as it was to make the old ladies shrink in the stalls, seemed to be overridden by the reckless daring of a wild spirit who half enjoys the unearthly scene, and the challenge he is casting at Fate.

‘More like the prince of demons than their prey,’ I exclaimed, as the curtain fell, turning eagerly round to Eva.

But instead I encountered the face of Mr. Gerard, who, unper-

ceived by me, had this instant come into our box.

He took a seat behind me with a smile at my ardour.

'The fireworks went off very well, did they not?' said he.

'Do you mean the owls and ghosts in the Wolf's Glen?'

'Yes. Quite the most ridiculous bit of spectral claptrap on the stage.'

I sighed.

'Mine is such an obliging sort of imagination. It makes no more objection to glorifying theatrical tricks than Shakespeare's audience had in supplying fanciest streets, crowds, armies, and battles when required.'

'Then am I to suppose that in the last act you saw real and terrible birds of prey, real monsters, real fiends?'

'Of course I did. And you—you only saw rubbish; wire toys, like scarecrows, and mumming boys with masks and long tails, capering awkwardly about.'

'You have the advantage of me.'

'I feel that I have.'

'And can your lively imagination work miracles upon our Agatha to-night? (Agatha was an elderly young lady of some forty summers, fair, but distressingly fat) —'beautify her into "the loveliest peasant girl in Bohemia"?'

I laughed. 'Even my fancy must draw the line somewhere. But I think I have not been paying much attention to Agatha.'

'Ah, how stupid of me! Max has it all, naturally. What do you think of him?'

'I don't think he is a great artist,' said I sagely; for when Mr. Gerard asked a question he seemed to claim something beyond a mere conventional reply.

'What do you mean?'

'Not yet. He does not lose himself in his part; I do not think

he could. He tries instead to identify his part with him. He takes hold of some one point in it that reflects some quality of his own, brings that out, puts that first and the rest nowhere, and so gives us a one-sided impersonation. The impersonation is so striking as almost to make one forget the liberties he has taken with his *role*, but he has transformed it. So much for my opinion' (I had taken great pains to express my idea); 'now for yours.'

'What can a man add to such an elaborate criticism?'

'Say something, do,' I entreated impatiently, whilst Eva and Mr. Severn listened impressed.

'Well, I'll be practical, and say to my mind he's a failure.'

'O, why?' I pleaded; 'he has talent surely, and ought to succeed.'

'Talent is only the first step to success, not the ladder,' returned Mr. Gerard philosophically. 'You can't make a plum-pudding without plums certainly, but neither out of all the plums in store can you make a plum-pudding. I don't deny this man has good points, but he wants—' and he stopped.

'What?' I asked inquisitively. A man's opinion of a man is always worth having to a woman, if only as a curiosity. It is sure to be so far and wide of her own.

'Refinement.'

Eva exclaimed and defended him vigorously. I held my tongue; I felt Mr. Gerard had hit a blot. It was not so much refinement, though, as tenderness and elevation that Theodore Marston lacked. I acknowledged to myself suddenly that, with all his passionate ardour, he was crude and hard, and made but a second-best lover.

'But I don't suppose the audience will mind that,' pursued the critic.

I said that I hoped they would be more merciful; and as I spoke a terrible vision arose before me of having to sing to an audience composed of Mr. Gerards!

The third act began, and he returned to his post in the stalls. During our conversation I had observed Hilda opposite, bestowing on us a most flattering amount of attention. For Miss Jarvis the performance went on during the 'waits,' and then only. The opera itself was an interlude. She had frankly confessed to me that she regarded it, as she regarded most things—croquet, riding, art exhibitions, even church—merely as an excuse for bringing people together. You might as reasonably talk of the co-relation of the physical sciences to your horse as of pure musical enjoyment to her. The nearest approach she knew was the thrill excited by the strain of some familiar waltz striking her ears—strains associated with first ballroom triumphs; and the art of Madame Elise was the only one for which she had ever felt spontaneous enthusiasm.

Max, now that the demons have been routed, is himself again, and reappears in his original mood, naïf, impulsive, self-willed, and soft-hearted, and so remains throughout all the final vicissitudes, till his ordeal and the opera end at last, he and Agatha join hands, and the curtain falls.

Flat as it is, the act had a germ of life infused into it that evening. Theodore Marston was the hero of the hour, and at the close was greeted by applause we thought tremendous. A special call for Max followed. When he appeared a few bouquets fell, thrown by some obscure female admirer, but

they looked worthless and foolish; he had deserved better.

'If only we had one,' sighed Eva; 'your rose, Maisie.'

In a moment of operatic enthusiasm I flung it on the stage—at the stage rather; for flung awkwardly by an inexperienced hand it fluttered feebly through the air, and tumbled—at Mr. Gerard's feet instead of at those of Max.

In the confusion no one but myself, I fancied, had noticed the incident. Looking down the next moment I saw that both rose and man had disappeared.

He came out to meet us in the lobby, still holding the luckless flower.

'Isn't this some of your property,' said he, 'that has lost its way?'

I laughed, not knowing what to say.

'What?' he resumed playfully; 'perhaps then it was *not* intended for him after all, but—'

'It *was* intended for him, and he had earned it fairly by hard work,' I replied obstinately.

'And I've done nothing to deserve it; only I've got it, and shall keep it.'

'Keep it, keep it, Mr. Gerard. Give it an honourable place in your collection.'

'My collection?'

'I thought every gentleman kept a collection of--what shall I say? locks of hair, bits of tarlatan, artificial flowers, and bows, all carefully sorted and labelled, sacred to the memory of this dear departed ball or that masquerade.'

'You don't suspect me of such superstitious practices, I hope and trust,' he said, with emphasis.

The next moment Hilda Jarvis came up to speak to me. I felt convinced she wanted to attract Mr. Gerard's attention, as he beyond all question had attracted hers. She was most becomingly

dressed, but all her subtle manoeuvres were in vain. Mr. Gerard was looking the other way, and she could not even make him see her. She decided that he must be stupid, but it followed not. There are men, and wide awake enough, who can only think of one thing at a time.

CHAPTER VI.

RED-LETTER DAYS.

THE next morning, waking from some runaway dream of delight, I awoke to a strange novel sense of happiness for a moment, as if some magic blessing had fallen on me from the stars as I slept, and I was to find all the gifts of Fortunatus heaped up by my bedside.

They come, those sudden spirit revolutions, and shake one's faith in one's own character. I, who clung piously to my identity, could not give up my old self without a struggle. So I began to reason, to ask why, to look back, trying to set my mind's house in order, and to find out the missing link between the *ego* of to-day and the *ego* of heretofore.

Here was I in the world: that was a first principle, an established fact, something to start from.

But what in the world, for? How often had I asked myself that question, demurring indignantly of course at the respectable traditional solution that woman's sphere is that of a satellite, her business to dance attendance on man as his helpmeet. The first chapters of Genesis are still made use of to back up certain theories about the relations of men and women, husbands and wives, by the same people who otherwise discard their contents altogether, and at these inconsistencies I laughed as they deserved. If

sometimes I fell in with not so much the first chapters of Genesis as the spirit of poetry and romance, which is like oxygen to our young mental life, so far as to regard love, and marriage its outcome, as the cardinal points of destiny, never did a girl take less thought for them than I. Like birth or death, I supposed they would come, if they were to come, without asking my consent. But not even their shadow had hitherto arisen to vary the monotony of this mental vegetation.

My friends of my own age, such as Hilda Jarvis, found a tempting field for the exercise of their faculties in the general female scramble for power over man, three times as fiercely fought out in Vanity Fair as on emancipation platforms. I could not blame or despise Hilda and company for scheming for husbands: it might be a necessary feature in the struggle for existence; it was certainly the single natural outlet provided by their education and surroundings for any talent or ambition with which they might happen to be encumbered. It might be eccentricity on my part which had made me prefer not to interfere with the course of social evolution on that point, and really find more pleasure and interest in my favourite musical studies and the interchange of ideas with Eva in our attic than in the increase of partners at balls, and the determination of the largest number of empty-headed young men to my side after a dinner-party.

'I ought to be a "social failure,"' I said to myself again and again, though feeling all the same secretly right glad that there were no signs of that just at present. The worst was that to succeed I had always to be acting a part, a part of which I foresaw that I should not take long to tire. Often al-

ready, after an evening spent in chattering nonsense to young officers, waltzing and quadrilling with collegians, discussing the weather and the parks, servants and pet animals, with dowagers, myself one of a pack of 'unidea'd girls,' how often when it was over I seemed to throw aside a mask, and ask myself if this was all youth and pleasure had to offer—and if with some people, born in polite but frigid circles, the tedium of routine might not lead on to some desperate step—who knows what? Theodore Marston had asked himself this, and answered in the affirmative. He had felt his wings and flown. But then he was a man. '*La carrière ouverte aux talents*' is as yet but half acknowledged as a rule extending to womankind, and he who proclaimed the maxim to the world had a very opposite law for us.

Society, I decided, was not enough to satisfy this fretting energy. It does well as an extra, like pastry after dinner; but one cannot live upon fritters. Men, even cornets and collegians, have it offered them as dessert. To a young lady it often makes up the bill of fare of existence. My 'home duties' were now an unpaid sinecure. The twins had their governess. To my mother I was useful as an excuse for going into society, which she loved; but why should society-lovers need an excuse for following their bent?

I was free, but it was a barren freedom after all. I might practise from morning till night if I pleased, improve myself till I was worth taking out a patent for. But 'to what purpose is this waste?' was the question that too often suggested itself—waste, as it seemed to me, of trouble and energy. What, indeed, beyond the selfish one of amusement?

The 'perfection of the individual' was a motive as yet too far out of my reach for me to give it a thought. For that one must be forty or a Goethe. Thus I had gone on 'cultivating my mind' quite purposelessly, but convinced that there is, or ought to be, something else for women to look forward to in this present world beyond adding to an already too numerous population, and in the mean time to be well dressed, able to talk a little, to sing a little, if in tune preferred, and to write notes of invitation in a lady-like hand. Such a life, to nine out of ten, would be simply and absolutely intolerable but for the vague illusory hopes that buoy up youth throughout its melancholy.

Are they illusory always? That Fata Morgana it had never before been mine to approach, had it come and touched me? That prize in the lottery of life which lies somewhere in the wheel, and may turn out to be ours, was it nearing me now, in the form of Love, the king, the reconciler between woman and her wrongs, or her sphere, which ever it may be, having come thus without herald or warning?

The proof? That I felt more interested in a man I had only seen twice than I had ever been with any one else in my life. The reason? I could give none, but that flash of feeling that came like a revelation, a sudden strange *entente* that passeth all psychology; a perception that, though Jasper Gerard was a man who had seen the world inside and out, I a girl who had never been out of leading-strings, our souls had somehow been travelling the same road, taking the same impressions, forming the same opinions, retaining the same associations, harmonising—though at a distance—and strangers.

Away with philosophy; away, also, with silly school-girls' sentimental speculations. I shook off the dreams that hovered about me, and to distract myself practised *sofleggi* as diligently as a student preparing for an examination.

A week went by. It was a sultry summer's evening. My mother had taken the twins to a children's tea-party. Towards six o'clock I bethought me of going over to Eva's for an hour. I had a present to take her of some fruit that had been sent us from the country, and knew I should find her at her easel as long as the daylight lasted.

It was one of those extraordinarily hot days that play fast and loose with London etiquette. Whalebone itself would melt away in the sun. Brave Bengal tigers walk down Bond-street in white apparel, and no one can even laugh at them. Men go about gasping, hat in hand; others with linen on the nape of their necks. Ladies and their toilettes are generally limp. The demoralisation is complete, and nothing but a thunderstorm will cure it.

Eva's landlord, an Englishman, had actually left his castle or house door open. I ran up-stairs, and walked coolly, in every sense but one, into our attic, singing. 'Cherry ripe, cherry ripe, cherry ripe,' I cried, as I entered. Fresh and pleasant beyond description was that little retreat of ours, redolent with verbena and mignonette. Eva stood there among her birdcages, feeding a paroquet and looking unusually demure. But the light was dim, and not till I got to the middle of the room did I perceive that we had a visitor, and that our one chair—it was of carved oak and said to have belonged to Lady Jane Grey—was occupied by Jasper Gerard. A provokingly weather-

proof person he; unexceptionably dressed as usual, cool, comfortable, and serene. All at once I became conscious of my hopelessly Bohemian appearance that day, in the height of the season too, and here in the fashionable western district; no attempt at an elaborate toilette—trailing tumbled white dress, tangled hair, my yellow-straw hat and blue ribbons hanging behind me, and a basket of cherries and nectarines in my hand.

I walked up to Mr. Gerard valiantly, offering him my wares as gracefully as was possible under the circumstances.

'Will you buy, will you buy? They are really very fine nectarines, sir,' I added, in mock apology, 'and don't come off a stall.'

He laughed, and offered to shake hands; but I declined, and showed my palm.

'Couldn't. Look at that. It is worse than Lady Macbeth's—"not all the perfumes of Araby," you know—'

'Try a good scrub with Windsor soap,' said he, possessing himself of the hand, cherry-stains notwithstanding.

Then I took down our precious cracked Chelsea plate, worth its weight in gold in our eyes, and offered it to him with some fruit. He seemed amused, and accepted with a good grace.

'Have you any news of the hero of the other night?' I asked, as we began the feast. 'Is Mr. Marston content with his reception?'

'Quite the reverse. Never trust a "first night." I saw him this afternoon, poor fellow. We may tell him any judgment of charity fibs we please, but the whole thing is a failure. He is so badly supported, and has not yet a great name that could fill the theatre by itself. The

manager is out of pocket, and will close the season shortly, I imagine. As for Theodore, he goes abroad soon, to Germany, where he has patrons and professional interest. By the way, the tiresome fellow wants an opera libretto for some composer he won't name, some friend of his, to set to music; and he bothered me about it till, in an unguarded moment, I promised to write him one.'

'An opera libretto? I exclaimed, interested; 'and on what?'

'On the Disestablishment of the Church, for all I can tell you now,' he retorted, laughing. 'I have not even begun to think about it yet, and they say besides that it takes a lot of reading to get an original idea.'

'Must it be original?' I said suddenly.

'Why do you ask?'

It was only that an old story had occurred to me; a story, I told him, so old that it was quite as good as original, and which I thought might do.

'Really,' said he incredulously; 'then I shall be much obliged if you will make me a present of it at once—tell it me, at least.'

'Now—this minute?'

'This very minute as ever is.'

'I don't know,' said I, hesitating, aghast at the trap into which I had walked. 'It is old-fashioned, and so romantic it ought to be sung, not said.'

'No matter,' he urged; 'sing it, if you please; only begin.'

'It is a tragedy, I warn you.'

'Never mind; I like to be harrowed. Go on.'

The light is fading rapidly, I cannot see my audience very clearly, or whether they laugh at me; the convolvulus flowers and the birds have gone to sleep. From the regions below come the inspiring sounds of some fantasy pieces of Schumann's; Herr von

Zbirow is playing his very best for his own benefit. All this is in my favour. I clear my throat and begin.

'Count Dario had an only daughter. She was beautiful Perdita, an Italian girl-beauty, with black hair and passionate eyes, far too lovely for life to be easy to her. A mysterious shadow had clouded her youth. At her birth her father, who was deeply superstitious, had had her horoscope cast by a famous astrologer. The prophecy then uttered, that she was threatened in love with a fatal peril that should overtake her before she reached her twenty-first year, haunted the Count night and day. It induced him to bring her up in the strictest seclusion. As the time drew nearer, tormented by vague fears for her safety, he barely allowed her to stir from the precincts of the castle where they lived.

'It stood upon an island in a lake, so precaution was easy. But in spite of all he could do, Rafael, the "young prince" of the story, a stranger in the neighbourhood, had contrived more than once to see Perdita walking in the gardens, she him in his boat on the lake. Glances were interchanged, and hearts of course. They found means to communicate secretly, and at last he persuaded her to consent to fly with him from her present captivity. He would contrive the means of escape. The plan succeeded, Rafael carrying her off by night to a castle of his own in a forest not far distant.'

'So far, so good,' said Mr. Gerard, nodding approvingly. 'That might be worked up into a first act perhaps. I like your story, Miss Noel. Pray go on.'

'A little while, and the sunshine is at an end. News came to Rafael from his mother at Florence—news of her illness, with

a summons to her bedside. He felt he must obey, though doubly loth, for reasons of which Perdita knew nothing, and which he dared not betray, to return to his home. He broke the fact of his enforced journey to her; and overwhelming her with vows and protestations of everlasting faith and affection and so on, he departed, leaving her in the lonely castle.

'But Perdita was haunted by a strong foreboding of evil, a sharp mistrust, which forbade her to rest or to wait in patience and hope. She followed him by stealth in boy's disguise, taking a pilgrim's dress, and transforming herself so successfully that her lover, when she overtook him, could not recognise her. Rafael accosted the young stranger, and was taken with such a singular fancy for him that he engaged him to enter his service as page. When questioned by his master as to whence he came, the boy would only reply with a song:

"Vengo da parte addove sempre 'ne pianto
Stace una donna e dice, 'O bianco viso,
Deh chi me t'ha levato da lo canto?"

'The words and air had an extraordinary fascination for Rafael. They brought back Perdita to his mind, and again and again, as he journeyed on, he would oblige his young minstrel to repeat the strain. At last they reached Florence, and the palace where Rafael's mother held her little court. She was not ill, and frankly avowed to him that her message was only a stratagem to bring him back to her side.

'For Rafael, before leaving home, had, as Perdita was now for the first time to learn, been more than half betrothed to Lucrezia, the daughter of a noble and powerful house. During his absence, political and other reasons had arisen to make a speedy alliance between the two families

more than ever desirable. The preparations, said his mother, had been hastened, and the nuptials are at hand.

'Rafael, caught in a web from which he saw no way of escape, preferred a secret to an open disgrace. Yielding to the force of circumstances, he submitted reluctantly to fulfil his part, and obey his mother's command. And Perdita had to be present throughout. She would die now sooner than speak. As his page she was in attendance on him, and stood by his side during the festivities. As his page she was presented by Rafael to the bride Lucrezia. The marriage was celebrated with pomp and state, but Perdita stood by, stung to death by the desertion of her lover. As the evening drew on, Rafael sent for the page to sing to him and his bride his favourite song:

"Vengo da parte addove sempre 'ne pianto
Stace una donna—"

'She sang and sang; still he called for it again. Till on a sudden the singer's voice failed, and she sank fainting on the ground. Rafael rushed up in alarm, to find hanging round his page's neck the locket he had given as a parting pledge to Perdita. Too late he recognised her, and rued his treachery now that she lay dying before him. In his sudden remorse and despair he stabbed himself; and Count Dario, who had followed Perdita, and succeeded in tracing her at last, broke in to find the fatality that threatened his child fulfilled upon her and her lover.'

I stopped, and there was a solemn pause.

'That is the nearest approach to an original idea I can give, and it is as old as Puss-in-Boots, as I told you.'

'Thank you for the story all the same,' said Mr. Gerard, rising.

'What do you think of it?'

'O, that it's exactly what I want—what I was trying to make up,' he said, laughing. 'The next step is to put it into some sort of rhyme. I shall come down upon you for that next time we meet.'

And he left us. Eva lit the candles and began painting. I walked up and down the room like an animal in a cage, in a ridiculous state of latent excitement—calm at the moment, but ready to laugh, cry, sing, dance, on the smallest provocation.

'Eva,' I began at last, 'what do you think of Mr. Gerard?'

'Well, you know, I admire him deeply, and think him a kind of paragon of men.'

'But why, Eva, why? You call him clever, yet he cannot paint like you, nor play like Herr von Zbirow, nor sing and act like Theodore Marston. Is he learned? No. Is he famous? No. Can he do anything better than anybody else? No. Why, the very mountebank in the street who can keep six balls flying in the air at once has the advantage of him by excelling in something. Yet you call him a superior being. What do you mean by it?'

But Eva was not to be taken aback by any volley of words.

'Depend upon it, there is something, Maisie. If he does not shine out in any department it must be because he is too perfectly developed.'

I burst out laughing.

'Defend us from perfect development,' I cried, 'if eternal mediocrity is to be its result.'

But Eva was obstinate.

'Distinction is scarcely to be had except by the cultivation of one gift at the expense of all others.'

'So Mr. Gerard is too good in general to be anything in particular. Is that it?'

'Yes, I suppose so. But why this catechism?'

'Because, dear,' and I knelt down beside her, and hid my face whilst I spoke in a bunch of peonies that stood in a blue-gray jug, 'I have seen lots of famous men; lions—literary lions, artistic lions, social lions of all ages and sorts and kinds—and some of them were charming people too. Yet if I was a man, and had my choice, I would rather be Mr. Gerard than any one of them.'

'Is that all?' asked Eva, amused at this somewhat novel mode of praise.

'And I admire him more than all of them put together, and I feel sure that if he will never set the Thames on fire it is only because he will never try.'

'Is that all?' she repeated, laughing at me.

'Isn't it enough?' said I, rising indignantly. I thought it a good deal myself, and assured her she should hear no more that night.

But to her surprise and mine he came several times in the course of the next few weeks. I wondered why. Our tea was not above the five-o'clock average. He had never, Eva let drop, be-thought him of calling upon her before. Then the conversation was mostly between him and myself, Eva listening with the patience of an angel that she was.

What, then, was the attraction? Myself? Was it likely, now? Jasper Gerard was a man over thirty, who had lived (not vegetated) away half his life, travelled, loved no doubt, and by nature and education the most fastidious of mortals. Was it likely, was it even conceivable, that on such an insignificant person as I must have appeared in his eyes he should waste a second thought?

It is certainly rather hard that

a man should never be supposed by women to do the smallest thing without some wise purpose. That Mr. Gerard had no definite design in coming to our studio, beyond the fact that he had found out it made a pleasant lounge, was too simple an explanation to recommend itself.

Such is the penalty of masculine greatness!

But an evil genius, speaking nothing but the truth, as devils always do when they mean real mischief, whispered instead, 'Jasper Gerard has come to that age when a man worth anything is sickened with the glitter and show that make up three-quarters of the world, and proof against the artificial and meretricious. Unconsciously, perhaps, he prizes reality first above all things, and it pleases him to meet with it. You, for instance, do not attempt to look different from what you are—to dress like a duchess, which you are not, to express feelings you have not got, nor to hide those you have. So he finds something refreshing, something new, it may be, in your society, and that is why he seeks it.'

I forced myself to break off, nor take to wing in a land of thoughts created by wish. But it was only to go over to Eva's, perhaps there to meet Mr. Gerard himself and beatitude; or perhaps he would not come, and I went home disgusted. But these disappointments grew rarer and rarer.

One day he came there on an errand for his mother. Mrs. Gerard had commissioned him to induce Eva to come and paint for her at the Priory. There was a fine aviary attached to the conservatory, and the idea had been started that the canaries, parquets, and waxbills should be depicted 'at home,' among palms, plantains, cactus, and other tro-

pical shrubs there forthcoming for backgrounds.

'I shall like it extremely,' replied Eva, delighted. 'Please to thank Mrs. Gerard, and say that in about three weeks' time I shall be at liberty, and staying altogether at Westburn, so I could give my whole time to the Priory.'

Longer and longer grew my face as she spoke, lower and lower sank my spirits. In about three weeks' time my mother, the twins, and I were going to the seaside for several months, a pleasure trip I always took very sadly indeed. The thought of it alone, at that moment, was enough to make me lapse into silence which I scarcely broke till our visitor was gone. As he left and shook hands with me he asked,

'Shall we ever see you at Westburn? When Miss Severn makes our conservatory her studio, won't you share it sometimes?'

I wanted to speak, but something seemed to choke me, and I could only smile vacantly in reply.

'Maisie,' began Eva warningly, when we were alone; but suddenly breaking off and changing her tone, she exclaimed, 'Dear child, I don't know what to think, but I do begin to suspect that Jasper Gerard—'

'Hush, hush!' said I, bestowing ruinous caresses on a pot of mignonette; 'why should he?'

'Listen, Maisie. You said you were going to the seaside next month. Let the others go; but you come and spend a few weeks with me at Westburn.'

I looked up radiant. 'Are you in earnest?'

'Of course I am. Uncle will be delighted. Will you come?'

I only threw myself into her arms.

'But, Eva,' I resumed seriously, 'before we move a step out of

this room there is a question you must answer.'

'Well, let me hear it. But why this solemn tone?'

'Because it's a solemn moment. Swear to speak the truth.'

'I promise.'

'Mr. Gerard,' said I, in a formal constrained voice, 'is he a man that you care, or ever could care for, yourself? because—'

I said no more. Eva stopped me by a laugh so hearty that it answered me at once.

'No, Maisie, ten times no. I admire him, but get no farther. He fills me with awe now, just as he did when we were children

of ten or twelve, and I used to play battledore with him at the Priory. He was always very gentle, and used to ask what he had done to make me so afraid. There is something unapproachable about him, and I should as soon think of falling in love with a king or a high-priest.'

Exactly. There was a touch of the monarch in his nature which affected people in opposite ways. Eva's conservative turn of mind kept her at a respectful distance. I think it was that very imperial faculty that drew me to him with an irresistible attraction.

(To be continued.)

AT THE PANTOMIME.

CLEAR laughter shrill from childish throats, on older lips a smile,
At mimic scenes that for the hour life's carking cares beguile;
For who so stern can look around, upon the tiers on tiers
Of happy faces, but must needs recall again the years

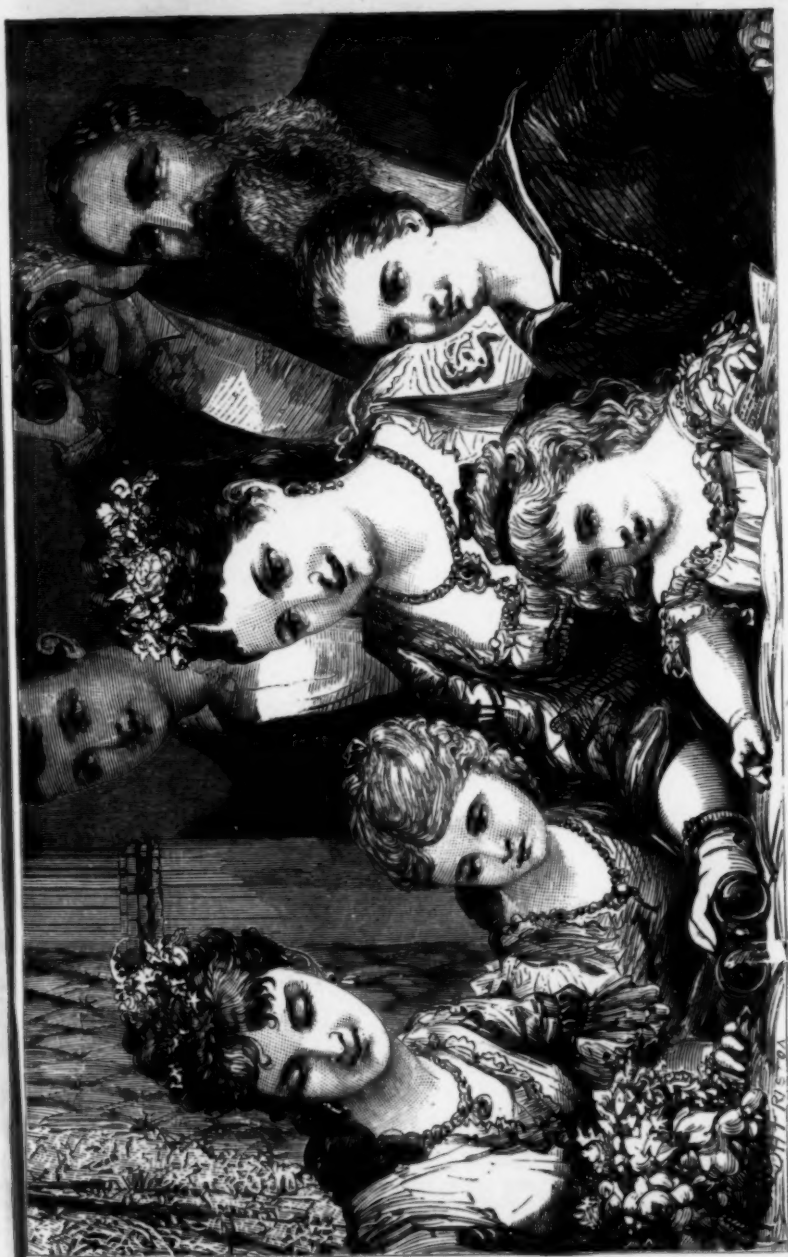
Of his own childhood, when to him was *real* each bright scene,
Each pantomimic jest true wit, each tinsell'd fay a queen?
Illusions that—alas, too soon!—must fade and vanish fast;
But bright and pure and innocent and joyous *while they last*.

A mother-rose—sweet English flower!—amid her rosebuds sits;
Across the father's graver face a passing sun-smile flits;
And Jessie, half in scorn, half mirth, from corner glances down,
Her dignity *compell'd* to yield at antics of the clown.

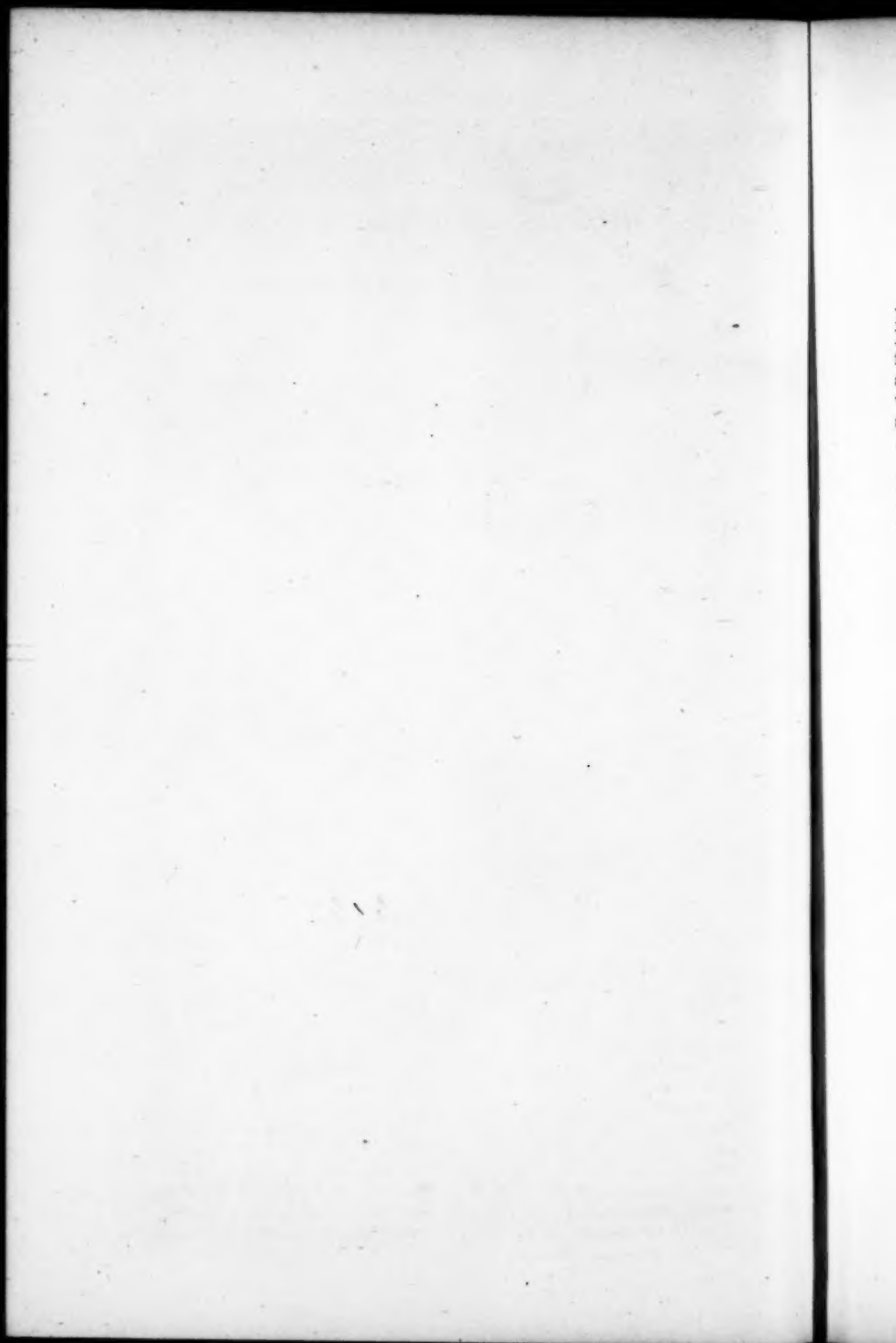
The childish faces flush with rose; his mother's eldest joy
His growing manhood throws aside, and is once more a boy.
We, weather-beaten, who have known life's sunshine and life's rain,
In our sweet blossoms, *this one night*, grow young and bloom again.

O human flowerets, fresh and pure, new open'd in life's spring,
God grant that blessings to ye all the coming years may bring!
And that the scenes ye greet to-night with silvery laughter clear
May be but types of those to come for many a happy year!

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.



A BOX AT THE PANTOMIME.



WINTER RESORTS OF LONDON SOCIETY.

MONACO—MENTONE—BORDIGHERA—SAN REMO.

Forty-two minutes by rail from Nice, and seventeen minutes by rail from Mentone, is Monte Carlo. Examine the railway time-tables, you will see that every train, of every sort of speed, not omitting those of *la grande vitesse*, stops there. M. Le Blanc and the directors of the Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles Railway, complainant where the interests of their railway are concerned, so will it.

Who is M. Le Blanc, and what is Monte Carlo, that directors not famous for being over-accommodating should agree to stop all trains between Marseilles and Genoa, and *vice versâ*, at this station?

M. Le Blanc, though not king of the place—for is not Charles Honoré III., Prince of Monaco and Rocca-bruna, &c., lord paramount and feudal sovereign of Monte Carlo and of the three adjacent square miles?—is a very powerful mayor of the palace. His Highness of Monaco would on no account be quit of him. Not only has he nothing to fear from him in the way of 'compassing the crown'—has not the Prince twenty-five soldiers, of all arms, and two thousand devoted subjects besides?—but he derives through him the means of making that crown sit comfortably on his own head. Thanks to M. Le Blanc, very 'easy lies the head that wears the crown' of Monaco. M. Le Blanc is a veritable pillar of the state. From his hands flow the means of paying the Prince's army, from the first to the twenty-fifth man; through him it is that this Prince is able to absolve his subjects from all tax-paying—happy Arca-

dians; through him that quaint fortified castle-palace of the Grimaldi is maintained in habitable condition, with something *à boire*, *et à manger* too, for the owner; through him not only the whilom barren rock of Monte Carlo, but the seaward scarp of Monaco itself, has bloomed into the most lovely of semi-tropical gardens. M. Le Blanc is 'the genius of the shore.' His philanthropy Monaco-wards is wonderful. Though an alien—for France claims M. Le Blanc's allegiance—he contributes everything, pays for everything, demands nothing, except—the right to make a 'hell' of one of the fairest spots on the face of the earth.

Monte Carlo is the last surviving public gaming-place in Europe. Homburg, Wiesbaden, Spa, Baden-Baden, having passed through a purgatory of gambling, have entered, let us hope, on a purer existence. They must have drawn largely, one would think, on the stock of cleansing fires ere the sins done in their gambling lifetime were 'burnt and purged away.' But however that may be, they have as a matter of fact repented, and now 'live cleanly,' as gentlemanly cities should. Monte Carlo survives them, surpassing the best of them in the loveliness of its scenery, and rivaling the most completely organised of them in the thoroughness of its interior arrangements. That this is no small praise, those of our readers will admit who remember the well-ordered saloons of Baden, the brilliant Kursaal of Homburg, and the master-spirit which pervaded everything, from the designs

on the card-backs to the judicial calm of the croupiers at the spa of the Ardennes.

Without question, Monaco and its outlying Monte Carlo are fair to look upon. Sated as the eye of the traveller eastward must be with the beauties of the Riviera, involuntarily it lightens up and is conscious of a new pleasure as the territory of Charles Honoré III. bursts upon the view. The sea-girt rock, which rises to a height of a hundred and sixty feet, and upon the summit of which stands the town of Monaco, with the fortress that Vauban built to protect it on the land side, stands out to the right of the picture; beyond it, and on three sides of it, the deep-blue water of the Mediterranean splashes and tumbles; while Nature, seemingly jealous of the beauty of the scene, forbids low tide and the discovery of those marine horrors of mud and shingle incidental to it. The palm and the orange-tree, the eucalyptus and the pepper-tree, crowd out the sombre olive which dominates in all neighbouring landscapes; and the introduction and careful culture of every form of semi-tropical growth contribute to an effect which is exceptional even in this very exceptional district. From the foot of the causeway, which leads to the gate of the town, an inverted arc, a mile from horn to horn, leads along the shore to the slope of Monte Carlo. Nature has done little for Monte Carlo beyond giving a lovely site. The abrupt rock, barren of vegetation, avoided even by the goats, who had tried it and found it wanting, owes its present wealth of beauty to art and the fostering lavish hand of M. Le Blanc. Terraces cut out of the hillside, and carpeted with the softest lawns, hold gardens in which the floriculturist reigns supreme. Considerations of expense enter not; no-

thing is allowed to impede the progress of the place towards becoming a refreshment to the eye and mind, and that 'joy for ever' which beauty is. Statues and fountains, fish-ponds and aviaries, lend their charms. Art vies with Nature to collect and to develop all that can attract to this lovely spot. Music hath her shrines shrouded in daintiest foliage, and here, many a time and oft, may be heard the sweetest strains that floated through the souls and brains of Gounod, Beethoven, or Mozart. In the great concert-halls of Monte Carlo sings the *primissima* of *prîme donne*, and there too gather for the great festivals of Le Blanc the cream of the sweet-throated who sing.

Incomparable are the views which are to be had from the gardens of Monte Carlo; comparable only to fairy work are the contents of the gardens themselves; and should the visitor, wearied with these pleasures, seek repose or that refreshment which the most poetically minded cannot dispense with, he cannot find on the continent of Europe better fare or better lodging than at the Hôtel de Paris, within the grounds of this enchanted garden of Armida. It is true he will be warned there, on taking up his abode, that he must carefully lock, not only the door of his room, but each door and cupboard therein, 'for fear of accidents;' true, also, that should he be so taken up with the beauties of the surroundings as to be heedless of the attraction of the grand *salon de jeu*, he will find, after a few days, that his rooms 'have been promised some time ago' to a Russian noble or a Sicilian count. But in the mean time the visitor may enjoy himself very much indeed, and at a moderate cost, without even entering the mystic temple where Fate pronounces upon the chances at roulette, and Experience

teaches how great are the odds against players of that simple game, or at trente-et-quarante.

If in Regent-street or elsewhere in the metropolis of London society a company are surprised over such a board of green cloth as is to be found repeated many times in the *salon de jeu* at Monaco, every member of that company is pretty certain to be shown up in the next day's police-sheet as an evil-doer of the blackest type. The fact of being found in such places as private 'hells' are, and must be, is of itself dead against a man who cares much for his character; but the homily he will have to listen to from 'the worthy magistrate,' and the fine he will have to pay, or the imprisonment he will suffer in default, will proceed upon the text, not that he was in the place, but that he was there for unlawful gambling. Circumstances alter cases very materially. That which is wicked in London, and punishable there with penalties, social as well as legal, is not only lawful, it is even enjoined by authority at Monaco.

The magistrate who condemned Mr. Punter Sharp at Great Marlborough-street may here realise a practical sympathy with his prisoner, and having, 'just for the fun of the thing,' or to please that charming-looking daughter of his, deposited his *louis*, losing or winning on it, upon the zero, may understand King Lear's strange question, 'Which is the justice, which the thief?' Every vice in the list of human offences has been fashionable in its turn in England, and there have not been wanting periods when several vices at once competed with nearly equal success for the mastery. Gambling is out of fashion now, except at clubs, at the grand-stands and paddocks of race-courses, and in those select private circles into which the po-

lice enter not, and therefore have no jurisdiction.

At Monaco, gambling is not only in fashion, it is at once the life and the occasion of life in the place. For it, and in its name, were reared those handsome halls, mirrored and candelabra'd, velvet-furnished and polished exceedingly as to floors and walls, which adjoin the Hôtel de Paris and stand at the top of the enchanted garden. In its service are enrolled those gaily-dressed bandmen who discourse such eloquent music, those plush-breeched green-coated servitors, who stand so janitor-like at the doors and about the rooms, ready to bow obedience to the moneyed *habitué*, or to collar and eject the 'souspect' and the 'welcher.' In its service manifestly have been educated those sombre leaden-eyed men, pale of face and dirty of shirt-collar, who sit on either side the centre of the table, and with ceaseless monotony spin the wheel of roulette, while comrades rake up or shovel out the consequences of the game. Whether they were ever young or blithe, whether they ever were the object of a mother's solicitude, or whether they were, like Macbeth, not of woman born, are questions which not unnaturally arise as one looks at their cheerless faces all bereft of sunshine. There they sit, day after day, hour after hour, at the gaming-tables, their only variation being from roulette to trente-et-quarante or rouge-et-noir.

One misses at Monaco the hollow-toned exhortation, '*Faites vos jeux, messieurs, faites vos jeux*,' and its natural accompaniment, '*Le jeu est fait*,' which used to be heard at Spa and Baden in old days. Silence is the rule of Monaco, broken only by the click of the roller as it falls into one of the wheel spaces, and by the judicial declaration of the result, delivered

sotto voce by the chief croupier.

But, apart from this, there is exactly the same arrangement, the same scrupulous fairness on the part of the bank, the same perfect trust in the ultimate advantage of that institution, the same reliance without touting on the natural attractions of play to allure poor humanity into the swing, that characterised the German and Belgian play-places. The only advertisement resorted to by the proprietor is in the shape of those charming gardens which beautify the place, those balls at which the beauty and ugliness of Nice delight to congregate, those *Tirs aux Pigeons* where a thousand pounds represents the *Grand Prix de Monaco*, those magnificent concerts from which, out of purely local and personal considerations, the music of *Orphée aux Enfers* should be for ever excluded. The reward of M. Le Blanc, the provider of all these things, the owner of this beautiful 'hell,' is ample, after its kind. In spite of the occasional visits of 'portents,' like the Maltese Bugeija, who, by wisdom or strange luck, found his way to win vast rouleaux from the bank; in spite of the raids which other mediums of the Bugeija stamp make upon his resources, the proprietor is in the long-run justified in his ghastly joke—'Jouez sur rouge ou vert, c'est Le Blanc qui gagne.' That he does gain is not only matter of notoriety, it is evident from the facts we have recited, from the apparently unremunerative expenditure he is able to make so freely, from an hour's observation of the crowds who throng the roulette-tables. All the world, men and women too, of every nation, come to pour their wealth into the lap of this *Cæsus*. The picture has been drawn times out of number. Witnesses of far

greater power than the present writer have described the intensity of expectation, the flush of success, the agony of disappointment, the stolid impassiveness, the nervous effort to appear nerveless, which may be seen stamped on the faces of the throng around the table. Artists have fixed the scene indelibly on their canvas. Why attempt to repeat the account? M. Le Blanc grows rich by voluntary offerings at the shrine of the great goddess whose high-priest he is. It is pure individual volition, apart from influence exercised by him, he will say, that brings trainsful of players from Nice and from Mentone to his gaming-place. The people come in hope of winning from him, not with the idea of losing to him, and 'I take my chance,' he adds, with a shrug of the shoulders, and asks, like another historical personage, whether he is his brother's keeper.

What is it to him that people play who cannot afford to lose, that families are ruined by the means which he provides, that duels and suicides and other forms of murder grow out of his entertainments? Is he responsible because doubtful characters, and many which are not doubtful, from all nations that are, choose to come to his palaces? Has he not directed that visitors at the hotel shall be warned against the prying habits of *chevaliers d'industrie*, and does he not provide funds for the pay of those five-and-twenty warriors serving in the armies of Monaco, who are bound by every consideration of duty and conscience to arrest such offenders? What has he to do with public morality, or the tendency of human nature to become debased by the exercises he provides for it? He is not accountable for human nature; he is human (so he says) himself, and he is as much entitled to take ad-

vantage of the weaknesses of human nature as the Stock-Exchange man who coins a fortune out of lies which he has helped to circulate, or as the shipowner who looks to his assurers rather than to his venture as the means of writing a profit on the voyage of an ill-found ship.

The defenders of M. Le Blanc wax quite eloquent on the great wrong done to him by impugners of his Monte Carlo. They insist upon regarding him as the Lord Bountiful of Monaco, to whom all Europe is indebted for providing in the territory and by the permission of Charles Honoré a class of entertainment which the prudery of less enlightened rulers has forbidden elsewhere. And when, as they point out, to this virtue he adds this other of universal hospitality, of devotion to the cause of the beautiful both in Nature and Art, they are indignant at the accusations brought against their patron.

The moralists must decide as they will about M. Le Blanc's claims, which are, after all, neither here nor there. It must rest with that not inconsiderable section of London society who resort to Nice and Mentone for the winter how far they will countenance a place and a system which stand condemned by the law of their own country and by the law of most civilised nations; how far they will subject their families to contact with the people who frequent the Monaco tables; how far they will encourage, even by their unassisting presence, a practice which the world's experience has proved to be pernicious.

Monaco itself can hardly be blamed for allowing the existence of Monte Carlo. A principality of which the traditions savour chiefly of piracy and pillage cannot be accused for consistency. As in the Middle Ages, and even later, its fort-crowned rock and

sheltered harbour were the home of some of the worst pirates of the Mediterranean, so in more modern days the exactions of its princes forced the outlying people of the principality to declare their independence, and to join themselves to the kingdom of Piedmont. First Mentone, then Rocca-bruna, in 1848, revolted from the small tyrannies of Monaco; and the tiny survival of mediæval feudalism lives by the contempt as much as by the allowance of France and Italy. As it is, Monaco remains, and we suppose will remain, a source of profit to the Prince, to M. Le Blanc, and to the railway, and a source of injury to Nice and Mentone, towns which money-bringing heads of families are more and more avoiding, because of proximity to Monaco, till some French ruler takes it into his head to abate the nuisance, and to extinguish a monarchy about whose fate no European conference will concern itself.

We gladly take leave of this lovely spot, marred for the present by the Demon of Play; and while acknowledging that the spirit keeps his house as well swept and garnished as that other spirit who was erst cast out of possession, we none the less return with relief to the purer atmosphere of Mentone, where roulette is unlawful and rouge-et-noir forbidden.

What a pleasant thing to look upon is that double bay in which Mentone stands! *Ah, ce bon Menton, ville charmante, mais diablement triste! L'air en est bon pour les poitrinaires. Voilà tout!* Our own opinions and those of our excellent French friend on the subject of this beautiful winter resort are only in partial accord, but there is no great divergence.

That the air is 'bon pour les poitrinaires' may be assumed from the number of those unhappy-look-

ing specimens of humanity one meets on the Plage and Promenade, in the hotels, everywhere, at Mentone. The eastern bay may be said to be theirs in fee-simple. There they sun themselves when the ill wind that blows nobody any good—that is, the ‘mistral’—permits them to go out; and on such occasions they may be found in every place that has the least claim to be considered ‘abritée.’

Of ‘places abritées’ there are many at Mentone; for unlike Cannes, where the country is much more open, the cliffs, ascending by rapid steps into veritable mountains, stand immediately behind the town of Mentone, and shield it, especially on the eastern side, from all winds. The eastern bay is in fact an exaggerated Ventnor, the backing, however, reckoning a thousand for every hundred feet of the Isle of Wight cliff. The western bay, severed from its compeer by a sharp point of land, and by the river which cuts the town into two, is much more open, and much more agreeable also to those who are not compelled by the necessity of their case to breathe only a hot-house atmosphere.

From the back-windows of any of the numerous hotels built on the western side of the river is a charming view—it was to this my French friend alluded when he tersely described the town—of the near mountains, and of those beginnings of mountains crowned with monasteries and with ruined remembrances of mediæval castles, which intervene between them and the shore.

Creature-comforts in the shape of excellent hotels, whose name is legion, are more abundant at Mentone than at any other place on the Riviera. Prices much the same as at Cannes, but perhaps rather lower, while the accommodation is not at all inferior. Still as regards the *tristesse*, no doubt

my French friend was right. There is something depressing in the very air of Mentone, a savour of ill-health unto sickness, which not even the extraordinary beauties of the scenery can shake off. At every turn one meets so many of the *poitrinaires* for whom the air is so good; and interested though one may be in watching the progress of these *malades*, the effect is not calculated to raise the mercury in one’s mental barometer. One who is not strictly of their number, and obliged to live in the eastern bay, would do well for every reason to seek his quarters in the Hôtel Splendide, Hôtel du Pavillon, du Prince de Galles, or some other of the good houses on the Monaco side. So may he hope to enjoy without too much *memento mori* the beautiful views and most enjoyable drives which are to be had in the neighbourhood.

If he be strong of limb and lung he may get some climbing, despicable perhaps to members of the Alpine Club, but for the average Briton, who has bounds to his ambition cloudwards, amply sufficient as an exercise; whilst the range of view to be gained by an ascent of four thousand five hundred feet—and many of the Mentone hills are of this height—will be reward indeed. He will enjoy a prospect grander in every way than that much-prized view from the summit of the Cannes Californie, or from the Nice heights behind Cimies. A background of Maritime Alps, with hill and mountain in every shape and form, and a view east and west of fifty miles of the Riviera, set off by a deep-blue band of the Mediterranean, in which Corsica can be seen rising high out of the sea seventy miles off, give a picture which one cannot readily forget, especially if he have had the good fortune to be lucky in his sunlight effects.

Those weaker vessels, male and female, who cannot achieve these things may yet insure on mule or in carriage an intense enjoyment of the beauties of the place. They can drive on the flat road, through orange-groves and olive-gardens, to the Cape of St. Martin, the western horn of the bay; they can drive along and through the eastern promenade, and for as long as they please along the Corniche road, across the Gorge of St. Louis, with its picturesque bridge and pathetic legend. They can by the permission of Dr. Bennett visit the curious and highly-interesting garden in which that eminent physician has gathered specimens of every flower and every shrub that will grow in the genial air of the place. If of a romantic turn, they can perform pilgrimages to many a place of which troubadours have sung; and they can recall upon the spot, with all the natural accessories to help them, many a scene of Moslem valour and Christian heroism. The Marquis of Lorne's 'Tale of the Riviera' will assist them mightily therein, and will repay their attention besides.

Having done these things, however—having taken in the sights that are to be seen, the views that are to be viewed—the truth of the Frenchman's remark forces itself upon the attention. One grows listless, then bored, then wearied of the daily round of sameness which Mentone presents for one's recreation, and it is with a sense of relief combined with consciousness of a base ingratitude that one gathers up one's traps, and, bidding adieu to this latest acquisition of France, sets his face towards Savona.

If he have time and money to spare, or even if he have not, the traveller will hardly fail, if he has a soul for scenery, to travel eastward from Mentone by the Cor-

niche road, that great route which Napoleon cut in the face of the hillside, and which has outlived his Ligurian Republic, and those political transformations of his that drove the descendant of the Green Knight of Savoy from his kingdom of Piedmont to his island of Sardinia.

Whether he goes by the road or by the iron way he will be stopped at Ventimiglia. Ventimiglia is the frontier Italian town since Garibaldi's birthplace and the district in which it lies were sold to France, and the Italian boundary was removed from the left bank of the Var. At Ventimiglia he will have the usual custom-house inspection, and according as he manifests the extent of his property in *lire* he will be detained longer or shorter by the guardians of the royal Italian revenue. He will do well to resist the Englishman's temptation to use strong words or fierce looks on the occasion. These are indications *à priori* of the non-forthcomingness of *lire*, and this element in the question of inspection being eliminated, bluster will but recoil on the blusterer's head. In such case the Italian dignity, believing that it will get nothing on which to support itself, can be very stiff indeed and occasion a great deal of trouble. *Verbum sapienti*. Travellers will apply it or not, according to their opinion of the morality or otherwise of doing so.

Having passed the custom-house, another three miles' run brings one to Bordighera, where two capital hotels represent the nucleus of what is growing rapidly into a pleasant winter resort. All kinds of flattering things are said by the learned about the climate, its suitability to the tender-lunged, and its restorative power on rickety bronchial tubes; but it is probably necessary to belong to the strictly

invalid class in order to have the capacity for enjoying without satiety this kind provision of Nature. The traveller in ordinary health who stays at Bordighera, having been admitted to the hospitality of the *Hôtel d'Angleterre*, or to the still better *Hôtel de Bordighera*—where he will learn the opinion of the natives on the value of Italian currency by means of a conspicuous announcement, '*Che i conti si pagano in oro*'—will sally forth to view the place. He will discover first that Bordighera is not at Bordighera, as the railway reckons it, but at some distance off on the top of a hill; and that a straggling modern set of houses, which vainly try to aggregate themselves into a town, comprise what Americans would term the location. Bordighera itself is an old town, built according to the wisdom of its founders on a hill, away from the shore, and to that extent protected, or at least placed at an advantage in respect of the visits of piratical visitors, Turkish, Christian, or both, who were over fond of looking in at ports of call, where they were absolutely unwelcome. All the way between Genoa and Toulon one sees perched up towns on the tops of hills, some of them singularly high, even so as to oblige the inhabitants to fetch water from below. They have generally a castle, or a castellated monastery, dominating the hill-top itself, the place where provisions and weapons were stored as the defence against assault or siege.

Old Bordighera is such a town; not so picturesque as *Vence-Cagnes*, near *Antibes*, nor as *Roccabruna*, nor *Eza*, near *Monaco*, but still remarkable, and a fair type—even in the matter of smells—of what such a medieval town can be.

Arrived at the top of the hill on which it stands, one is rewarded for his labour by the view pre-

sented; but he is seized also with that longing desire to get away which possessed *Robinson Crusoe* what time he ascended his mountain, and saw in the strange ship a chance of escape. The inducements to linger in the old town are few, and the new town is not yet formed. Under these circumstances the traveller returns thankfully to his inn on the *Plage*, and unless under a vow or in the active discharge of penance, hastens to 'fresh woods and pastures new.'

San Remo may hold him for a time, with its Italian decorated house-fronts, its bright gardens, its soft air, its picturesque situation, and its thoroughly English society. Here, rather than at Bordighera, will he seek to perform any vow which may be on him to spend time between *Mentone* and *Genoa*. Here he will lose something of his restlessness; here he will see the beginnings of what will develop into one of the best and most health-giving winter resorts of the lung-stricken. From all parts people are coming more and more each winter to San Remo; and if the municipality will only look to their drains in time, and insist on each new villa or house being decently constructed in this respect, they have the future making of the place in their own hands.

Between San Remo and Genoa no winter resorts stand, though, to use a Johnsonism, there is a 'potentiality' of them in several favoured spots. For the present, however, the accommodation provided in the established resorts between *Hyères* and San Remo is enough, and more than enough, for people mulcted of dividends,—Turkish, Egyptian, Peruvian,—and therefore unable for some years to come to indulge their fancy for winters abroad to the extent which has been fashionable.

Thus much, in the present num-

ber at all events, of some Winter Resorts of London Society. Till next month we shall be content to remain in our excellent quarters at the Grande Albergo in Genoa, enjoying daily, as one can enjoy in that fine old city, sights, scenes, associations, and memories which belong to all history and all time. Invalids cannot like the place, for its climate is as changeful as a young man's fancy; and its streets are so steep and capricious withal, in their ascents and descents, as to be only suited to the Genoese folk, whose sturdiness has become proverbial. But for those who are free to suit their own pleasure Genoa is a delightful place, full of many interests. If the aspect of the moderns offends one, he is at

no loss for companions. Was not Genoa the home of the Grimaldi, of the Spinole, and the Balbi? Were not the Doria among its admirals? was not Cristoforo Colombo its citizen? There is no lack in Genoa of good quarters, good music, good pictures, fine churches, fine streets, splendid palaces, and good company.

With these the present writer will content himself—as any one indeed may—till next month. Then he will set off, with as many as like to accompany him—in these pages, and in a purely imaginary steamer, for one of the oldest and best, though of late years disregarded, winter residences—the fortress island of Malta.

FRANCIS DAVENANT.



A JAPANESE LOVE STORY.

'The only girl I ever loved.' *Ancient Remark.*

THE temple at the little village of Meguro, outside the town of Yedo, is celebrated as being the last scene of a highly instructive and sentimental story. The name of Meguro means 'black eyes;' but whether it obtained that appellation from the pugilistic habits of its people or not, I am unable to say. As France has her grave of Abelard and Héloïse for young people suffering from hopeless attachments, as England has her ballad of the forsaken maid of Woodstock town, and Scotland its 'Auld Robin Gray,' so Japan has its magic love-story of Kamarasaki and Gompachi. On my visit to the place, I was accompanied by a gay young Japanese, in the employment of the British Minister, who spoke most excellent English, and during the drive he told me that this was how it all happened.

In the old days, when Japan was Japan, three hundred years before the obtrusive foreign devil had come, buying up all the old *cloisonné*, and making bad railways and building inferior steamboats for the government at extortionate rates; when gentlemen wore two swords sticking out of their belts, and the Mikado was a man often heard of, but seldom seen,—there lived in an inland town a young man called Gompachi. He was a fine-grown young man, who had done credit to his seven or eight bowlfuls of rice and high fish per diem; and except a slight partiality for sakki and knocking-in late at nights, up to the time when the story commences, his parents must have had every reason to be

proud of him. But even as Rob the Grinder met with his fate through his fondness for singing-birds, so were dogs the rocks on which Gompachi's bark was destined to come to grief. Dogs of all kinds he loved, but of fighting-dogs it was that he considered himself especially a connoisseur. Where he found them in Japan I can't imagine; for a more pusillanimous lot, more addicted to vanishing round corners as you approach, and valiantly barking from the tops of roofs and other similar points of vantage as you retire, it would be impossible to find out of Egypt. However, he either bred, or found, or, what is more likely, stole a dog which was able and willing to tackle any canine brother to whom he might be opposed; and Gompachi, from that time forward, began to wear coats of a noisy pattern and 'obies' of a preposterous length; and other young men and their dogs got up and slid when he and his tyke were abroad; and he accumulated, by backing his animal, as many brass tempes as would fill a portmanteau—a collection amounting in value to two dollars, or, if brass happened to be up, two dollars and a half. But one day another well-grown young man came into the town, and he also had a dog, and was willing to make a match of it; and so the appointed day came, Gompachi on the ground, leading his champion, and swaggering and rattling the tempes in his pocket, and offering odds on his favourite, as was his wont to do. His opponent was also of a speculative turn of

mind, and so the bets were made and the fight commenced. The battle was so equal and sanguinary that at length both dogs lay dead upon the ground; but before giving his final kick, very much to the appreciation of all the cats in the neighbourhood, Gompachi's dog had chewed off more than an inch of his opponent's tail, and on this ground his master claimed both the victory and the bets. The new-comer—who, if he had lived, might evidently have become a Japanese Gladstone—refused to pay, but declared himself willing to refer the matter to arbitration, and even hinted that two other courses were open for settling the dispute. Gompachi, however, would have none of it.

'Stump up, or I shall make you!' was all he said.

'Make your mongrel disgorge that inch and a half of my dog's tail!' said the other.

Words like these in Japan can only have one ending. It was out swords and cut three times, before you could say 'knife.' Gompachi was one too many for the stranger, who soon made a third corpse upon the ground. Then Gompachi wiped his bloodysword upon the paper handkerchief of his opponent, and took from his pocket all the small change he could find; after which he said he felt rather delicate in the chest, and thought a little sea-air and change would be about the best thing for him. And though for months afterwards the police kept asserting that they had received 'important information' as to his whereabouts, they always failed to produce his person to the authorities.

Gompachi walked away among the hills, till at last he met with some gentlemen who earned their living by sleight-of-hand tricks upon travellers on the Mikado's

highways; and as he began to have cravings for two or three of his usual wash-basinfuls of rice, he gladly accepted their invitation to spend the night in their country house, which at that time consisted of a vast inaccessible cave; and thus having finished his imitation of Rob the Grinder, he commenced a career on the model of that immoral young Spanish gentleman, Gil Blas. The robbers had of course heard his tempos rattling in his pocket, and had noted with envious eyes the silver hilt of the sword which had cut short the possibly political career of his late antagonist. But, as I have before said, he was a well-grown young man, and they thought they might as well put off the charitable task of relieving him of these articles until such time as he should be sound asleep. So they brought out the rice and the fish and the usual impossible pickles and sakki, and spent a pleasant convivial evening with a slight tendency to feel muddled, till Gompachi arose, yawning mightily, and announcing his intention of placing his neck on the wooden dumb-bell which serves these people for a pillow, he went to sleep. He was awakened in the middle of the night, not by a pain in his neck or elsewhere, but by the apparition of a beautiful young girl of fifteen summers. Writers of novels and love-tales always say 'summers.' Gompachi noticed, when the sakki was out of his eyes, that she had a pair of the loveliest sparkliest black ones he had ever seen peeping over a fashionable fan; a profusion of long dark hair, the neatest little sandals in the world, and a panier as big as a haystack. He began to hope that his queue was sticking properly forward down the middle of his head like a signpost, as the queues of Japanese exquisites should always do; and

him thus thinking, a voice like rippling water told of his danger.

'And if you please,' she said, 'they're sharpening their swords in the back cave at this moment, sir; and if you're not a bigger fool than you look, you'll get out of this place a great deal quicker than ever you came in, without so much as waiting to say "Woki-hi-arrigato-ki-si-on-ara," which is, being interpreted, "Much obliged to you for your information, and good-night, my dear!"'

But then, with that want of consistency which makes her sex the ducks they are—except when arguing—she proceeded to inform him that she herself was the daughter of a wealthy old gentleman in Kigoto, who had made his money in the city, and that a few days before, when out for a moonlight ramble, she had been stolen by these robbers, who were making her cook and do for them all kind of horrid work, which was spoiling her hands and her figure ever so, and made her miserable, let alone there not being a bit of polished metal in the place to do her hair by.'

I will say this much for Gompachi, that he was not the kind of fellow to go sneaking off and leave her to her fate, and his next imitation was the only good one I can record of him. He whipped out his sword and posted himself behind the door, thereby ending his rôle of Gil Blas, and adopting that of Mr. R. Swiveller when he aroused the single lodger of Bevis Marks. And as the first robber put his head in, he was down upon it like a guillotine, and repeated himself like a recurring decimal as each successive robber came to look after his comrades, until he had polished off the entire dozen. Then possessing himself of such portable articles as took his fancy he made

the best of his way to Kigoto with the black-eyed moonsmie, whose name I need scarcely inform my intelligent readers was Kamarasaki. Kigotean Belgravia made great rejoicings at the return of the missing damsel, though Mrs. Grundy, of course, had something to say about it, with unpleasant allusions to wonderful coincidences, the marines, &c. But her old father, who had made his fortune in Korean loans, and by floating companies for the opening of mines and other useful purposes, came out liberally, and offered Gompachi five hundred golden yen, and, what should have been of far greater value to him, the hand of the lovely Kamarasaki herself, who was now madly in love with her preserver. Gompachi had not the slightest objection to the five hundred yen, but as to the matrimonial side of the business he was not so clear. He was not indifferent to the lady's charms, but at any rate he thought he would like to have a look round the town of Yedo before his wings were clipped. I much fear that his mind was again running on fighting-dogs and book-making and loud suits. He therefore dissembled, as villains in love-stories invariably do, and said that he would be glad to avail himself of the happiness in store for him; but that first it would be necessary for him to go to Yedo to transact some highly important business. Her father, being a business man, rather liked this, and thought it augured well for the future. So Gompachi bade adieu to the sweet little Kamarasaki (the brute!), and told her in a false flirting kernoodling kind of way not to forget him, and that when the calls of the great commercial world ceased to press upon his anxious mind, he would return and make her Mrs.

Gompachi, and never dine at his club, or have bachelor friends to dinner, or smoke in the dining-room. Then he left for Yedo with a gay heart and a large umbrella, thinking how much prettier gold yen rattle in your pocket, as you walk, than brass tempos; and the poor little girl remained behind, to pour salt tears from those bright eyes into the gold-fish pond in the back-yard, and hold private rehearsals of imaginary conversations she would have with him when he returned, to no better audience than the sacred old family tortoise.

Gompachi was not destined to reach Yedo without further adventures. That habit of his of always rattling his money in his pocket was, to say the least of it, vulgar; and it would have been much better if the old city gent had given him a crossed cheque payable to order, and, best of all, if he had kept it for himself or his daughter. Gompachi was still a few miles from the town when it was getting dusk one day; and though the drowsy tinkling of his gold yen might have lulled the distant folds had there been any—there are no sheep in Japan—it had a very different effect upon six highwaymen, who were looking out for work, and fell upon him tooth and nail. Gompachi, it has been, I think, conclusively proved, was no coward, and he had the heads of three of them on the ground in a twinkling; but the remainder pressed on him hard and had almost overpowered him, when the arrival of an eighth person on the scene caused them to regard flight as an eligible move. His rescuer turned out to be possessed of the name of Chobei, a wardsmen of Yedo; that is to say, he was not of the Samurai, or military class, who were composed of swashbucklers like our hero, but

he was an honest burgher, taking part in city affairs, such as sewers and water, and was altogether a stout, simple-hearted, honest old fellow, with more good-nature than sense about him, as the sequel will fully show. A man has always a drawing to another whom he has rescued from imminent danger. Chobei took Gompachi home with him to Yedo, and was so charmed with his manners and conversation that he begged he would continue his guest as long as he should remain in the city.

Gompachi now commenced the diligent prosecution of the important business which had so unavoidably brought him to Yedo. He went in for a regular new fit-out of the old kind of suits—large stripes and squares, with a green dragon across the chest and a pack of hounds down his back. He also bought himself several pairs of lacquered clogs, together with red umbrellas, and 'obies' of an even more preposterous length than of yore. I make no doubt that he would have set up a private 'juirikisha,' had that very handy vehicle been invented at this epoch; as it was, he was obliged to be contented with a gorgeous 'norima,' or sedan-chair, like a meat-safe, which soon became well known at all the local race-meetings, matches, and dog-fights; and youths in Yedo of a sporting turn began to know that they could always get the market odds from Gompachi, and that he was generally good for a quart of sakki, and any number of shovelfuls of rice, if they had the good luck to meet him after ten o'clock P.M. How the respectable old Chobei could have stood this way of going on I can't imagine; but he appears to have endured it without a murmur, like a regular old Eli. His whole conduct shows him to have been a soft-hearted

old fool, and he swallowed all this, and a great deal more at the back, like a boa-constrictor; for Gompachi was always knocking-in late, and must have been heard nightly by Chobei offering inarticulate invitations to the police to assist him in putting his latch-key to any practical use, and was found deep in stertorous slumbers at six in the morning in his dirty clogs upon the nice clean matting, which is the very depth of bad manners in Japan. He was also a regular attendant at the theatres, and was to be found in the greenrooms, chucking the actresses under the chin, and calling them by their Christian, or rather their Pagan, names, and accompanying them home to the Yoshiwara after the opera was over, and standing suppers regardless of expense. Now the Yoshiwara is a place where no good well-brought-up young Japanese gentleman is ever heard of, or seen. And so matters went on, and Gompachi, from being a mere second-class country dandy, became a buck of the first water. He associated with young men whom one Vance, by an admiring country called 'the Great,' has distinguished by the title of the 'Rolling Rams,' or, if you like it better, was now a sort of Japanese 'Corinthian Tom.'

About this time it was rumoured among the fashionable Yedoeans that a most lovely and accomplished actress had come to the Yoshiwara, and would act the following week at the Yedoean Covent Garden of the period, it being positively her first appearance upon any stage. And numerous bets having been given and taken as to the colour of her eyes and hair, Gompachi, who, you may have observed, never allowed shyness to stand in the way of business or pleasure, thought he

would look round on the sly and see her previous to taking a few bets on the subject; and accordingly he called one afternoon and sent up his card, a flimsy piece of paper the size of a handkerchief, with his name printed in the centre, like the wards of a beer-cellar key. As he stood near the door, with his red umbrella in full bloom to shelter him from a possible dose of cold water which he fully expected would be sent him as a present from the top-story window, he was, greatly to his surprise, immediately admitted, and, before he knew where he was, the whitest arms in all Japan were round his neck, the prettiest face was buried in his bosom, and the brightest blackest eyes in the world were pouring salt tears of joy all over the green dragon and loud stripes that decorated his manly chest. Need I explain that the owner of all these incomparable charms was none other than the foolish darling little loving peerless Kamarasaki? Yes, she it was who now sat with her small white hand in the great splotchy paw of this vulgar unfaithful brute, who had never so much as given a thought for months and months to the pearl which had been placed so gratuitously beneath his feet. Little by little her story came out. She had nearly filled up the gold-fish pond with her tears, and had talked the sacred old family tortoise into his grave a thousand years or so before his time. Then she had noticed a change steal over the temper of her father. From being an easy-going pleasant old papa he had become each week more scruffy and aggravating, till one day he came home early, and sending his best clogs crashing through the paper window, he had calmly announced that the little game in the city

was all up. The Korean loan had been repudiated, and he had held on too long in the bubble companies, and was hoist with his own petard. To extricate himself from these difficulties, he had imported a cargo of Chinese nutmegs, which unfortunately for him had all turned out to be wooden ones. In a word, he was completely ruined, and could not pay three tempos in the yen; and at last things turned out so bad that his daughter, dear little Kamarasaki, had been obliged to come to Yedo and take a theatrical engagement to keep the family from starvation.

Gompachi, being one of those plausible fellows who could have talked the pigtail off a Chinaman, soon made it all square with poor little Kamarasaki, who had finished by mildly reproaching him, as well she might, for his cruelty and neglect. Whether any money was ever remitted to the old city gent, I am unable to say, but if so, I much fear it came out of the pockets of the little moosmie. Gompachi swore all kinds of perjuries; and she, poor thing, soon got quite bewildered with the gaiety of town life to which he introduced her. What chance had she to escape from the toils of this young swaggerer, who could look and say such winning loving things if he chose? So for some weeks they had a tremendous time of it, feeding the fish in the moat around the Shiro, or Tycoon's castle, and seeing all the races and wrestling and fine sights of the Asakusa, and having the height of fine living at the best tea-houses, till the wherewithal was all gone, and Gompachi could no longer go jingling his money as he walked, according to his wont.

As the obi and lacquered-clog makers began to call pretty often in the mornings about this time, leaving souvenirs of their visits in the shape of summonses, it became

clear that money must be had from somewhere. Old Chobei had been squeezed quite dry, and as it never at any period of his life appears to have entered into the brain of this young man to work, Gompachi now commenced his last and most celebrated impersonation of well-known characters, and this time chose Mr. Turpin as his model. He took long solitary walks in the country, and knocked on the head corpulent old farmers returning from market, living faster and more furiously than ever; and Kamarasaki in her innocence thought it was all right, and that the money was the fruit of legitimate business. But, to draw my story to a close, this kind of thing could not last for ever. The tenth farmer proved too much for Gompachi, and being handed over to the authorities he shortly found himself where he ought to have been long before—viz. on the execution-ground above the temple of Asakusa; and soon after his head and body, in two separate pieces, adorned the highest-gibbet in that place of skulls. The soft-hearted old Chobei, instead of saying that he had long foreseen it, and that it served him right, went, like an old imbecile, and bribed the Japanese authorities—with the same ease with which, if alive, he could bribe them in the present day—to let him have the body of this 'victim to circumstances;' a proceeding which all pious people with the odour of exclusive sanctity very strong, who comfort themselves with the idea of plenty of good hot brimstone for every one except the chosen few of their own Little Bethel, will no doubt deeply deplore. He laid the body in a grave which he dug with his own hands in the sacred ground of the shrine of Meguro, and went back sorrowing to his municipal duties and clean

mats; and the tragic tale of this well-grown immoral young snob was soon noised abroad throughout the city, till at last it reached the ear of Kamarasaki. Then she, poor child, arose and said never a word, but she went tripping along on her little clogs from out the gaudy Yoshiwara, and pattered away along the stony flags which lead to the temple of Asakusa, where the sacred pigeons dwell among the high eaves, and lame men offer sandals to the gods; and far beyond, she climbed the hill and crept along under the shadows of the cryptomerias that flank the path, thinking of the robbers' cave where he had fought for her so well, and the happy days spent with him in her father's house, and of the loving words and kisses with which he had stolen her heart and made her life so happy; and never letting one thought cross her despairing breast of his neglect, or his egregious snobbishness, or his abominable crimes, till she reached the place where her heart lay buried. And when she got to the grave, she flung herself on her face with a bitter cry, and drew the dagger which all Japanese girls keep beneath their obies, and know so well how to use; and then, first kissing the new-piled sods, she plunged the dagger into her breast, and the bright black eyes grew dim and glassy in death. Then old Chobei turned up again, like an amiable undertaker, and laid them side by side, and above them he put a large stone, which remains unto this day, to mark their resting-place. And all the young men of Yedo ever since who have sweethearts, and who have found that the settlements are all right, and that there is no fear of the money reverting back to the family in case of their wives dying without issue, make their vows here, and plight

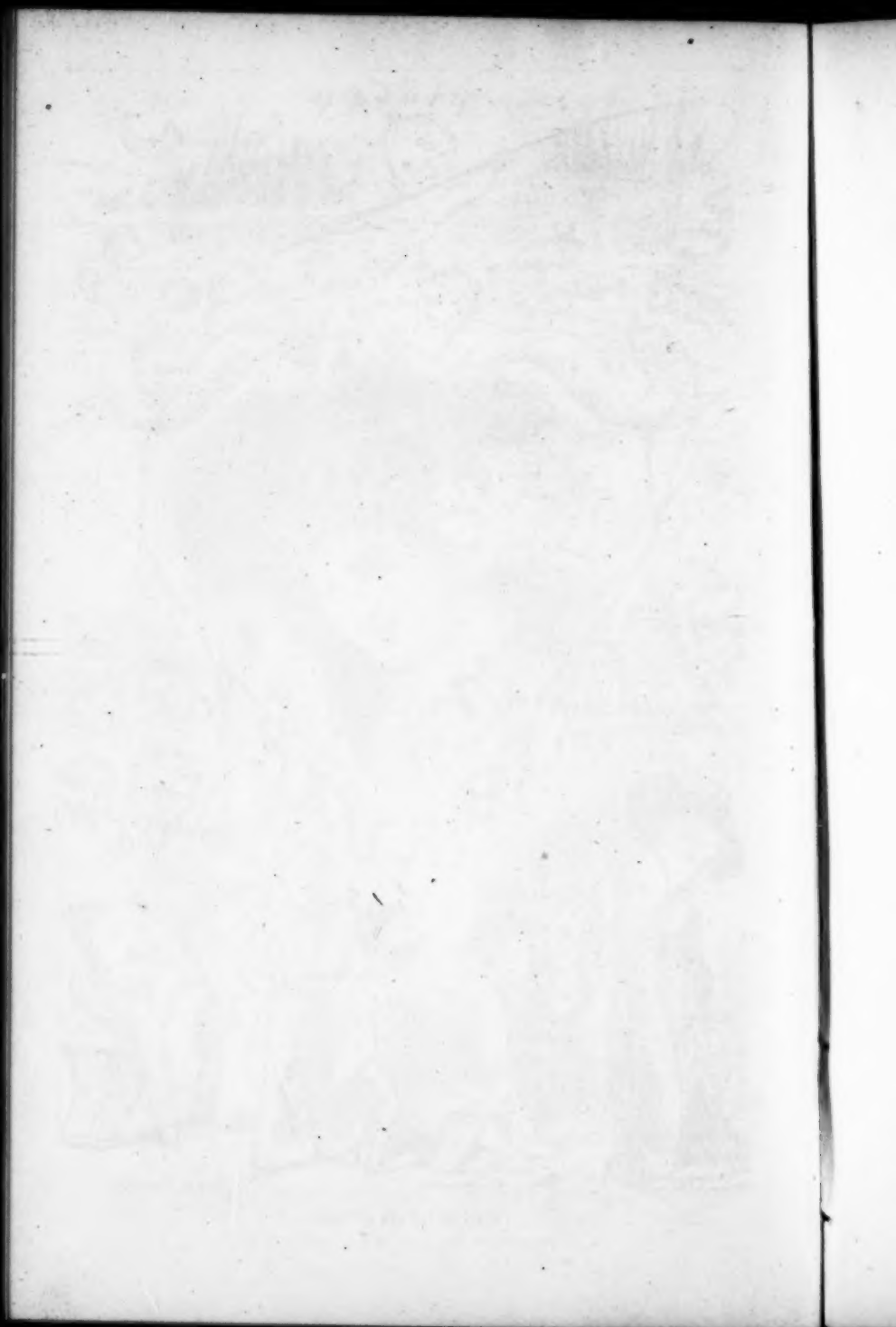
their troth, and write beautiful couplets, like those you find in Mr. Gunter's crackers, and twist the long strips of paper on which they are written among the branches which overshadow the tomb.

Such is the story as I heard it from the Japanese young gentleman who spoke such excellent English—a story which every boy and girl in Japan knows by heart; and as I stood looking at the old cracked moss-grown stone one sunny evening, there occurred to me the following thoughts: First, how strange it is that so many things which are of themselves innocent and harmless should lure us to our ruin, even as Rob the Grinder was undone by singing-birds, Gompachi by dogs, English gentlemen by horses, and little Kamarasaki by her natural affections and confiding nature. Secondly, how little difference there is between human nature three hundred years ago, when all this took place, and in the year of grace 1876, and how alike it is in longitude 0 and longitude 148 east of Greenwich. Thirdly, that I am myself acquainted with several Gompachis—a little altered, certainly, to meet modern requirements, but essentially the same—who are probably at this moment walking about the neighbourhoods of Pall-mall and Belgravia. Fourthly, that if ever I, a vagabond bachelor, should meet with an English moosmie possessing the charms and faithfulness of Kamarasaki, I would instantly propose to her, and, if accepted, try to behave better to her than did this gay young Japanese swell. And so, lighting a contemplative pipe, I returned to Yedo with, I am not ashamed to say, a kind thought in my heart for the memory of the faithful soft-hearted old Chobei.

GEORGE A. HOLME.



THE MODERN ZODIAC:
AN ARTIST'S ALMANAC OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.



MICHAEL STROGOFF, OR THE RUSSIAN COURIER.

BY JULES VERNE.

PART II.

CHAPTER VIII.

A HARE CROSSES THE ROAD.

MICHAEL STROGOFF might at last hope that the road to Irkutsk was clear. He had distanced the Tartars, now detained at Tomsk, and when the Emir's soldiers should arrive at Krasnoïarsk they would only find a deserted town. There being no immediate communication between the two banks of the Yeniseï, a delay of some days would be caused until a bridge of boats could be established, which would be a difficult matter.

For the first time since the encounter with Ivan Ogareff at Omsk, the courier of the Czar felt less uneasy, and began to hope that no fresh obstacle would arise to delay his progress.

The kibitka, after descending obliquely towards the south-west for fifteen versts, found and continued the long path traced across the steppe.

The road was good, for the part of it which extends between Krasnoïarsk and Irkutsk is considered the best in the whole journey; fewer jolts for travellers, large trees to shade them from the heat of the sun, sometimes forests of pines or cedars covering an extent of a hundred versts. It was no longer the wide steppe with limitless horizon; but the rich country was empty. Everywhere they came upon deserted villages. The Siberian peasantry had vanished. It was

a desert, but, as has been said, a desert by order of the Czar.

The weather was fine, but the air, which cooled during the night, took some time to get warm again. Indeed it was now near September, and in this high region the days were sensibly shortening. Autumn lasts but a very little while, although this part of Siberian territory is not situated above the fifty-fifth parallel, which is the same as Edinburgh and Copenhagen. However, winter succeeds summer almost unexpectedly. These winters of Asiatic Russia may be said to be precocious, considering that during them the thermometer falls until the mercury is frozen nearly 42 degrees below zero, and that 20 degrees below zero is considered a supportable temperature.

The weather favoured our travellers. It was neither stormy nor rainy. The heat was moderate, the nights cool. The health of Nadia and Michael was good, and since leaving Tomsk they had gradually recovered from their past fatigues.

As to Nicholas Pigassof, he had never been better in his life. To him this journey was a trip, an agreeable excursion by which he employed his enforced holiday.

'Decidedly,' said he, 'this is pleasanter than sitting twelve hours a day, perched on a stool, working the manipulator!'

Michael had managed to get Nicholas to make his horse quicken his pace. To obtain this result,

he had confided to Nicholas that Nadia and he were on their way to join their father, exiled at Irkutsk, and that they were very anxious to get there. Certainly, it would not do to over-work the horse, for very probably they would not be able to exchange him for another; but by giving him frequent rests—every fifteen versts, for instance—sixty versts in twenty-four hours could easily be accomplished. Besides, the animal was strong, and of a race calculated to endure great fatigue. He was in no want of rich pasturage along the road, the grass being thick and abundant. Therefore, it was possible to demand an increase of work from him.

Nicholas gave in to all these reasons. He was much moved at the situation of these two young people going to share their father's exile. Nothing had ever appeared so touching to him. Then with what a smile he said to Nadia,

'Divine goodness! what joy will Mr. Korpanoff feel, when his eyes behold you, when his arms open to receive you! If I go to Irkutsk—and that appears very probable now—will you permit me to be present at that interview! You will, will you not?'

Then, striking his forehead,

'But I forgot, what grief too when he sees that his poor son is blind! Ah, everything is mingled in this world!'

However, the result of all this was that the kibitka went faster, and, according to Michael's calculations, now made ten to twelve versts an hour.

On the 28th of August our travellers passed the town of Balaisk, eighty versts from Krasnoïarsk, and on the 29th that of Ribinsk, forty versts from Balaisk.

The next day, five-and-thirty

versts beyond that, they arrived at Kamak, a larger place, watered by the river of the same name, a little affluent of the Yeniseï, which rises in the Sayanok mountains. It is not an important town, its wooden houses picturesquely grouped round a square, but it is overlooked by the tall steeple of its cathedral, of which the gilded cross glitters in the sun.

Houses empty, church deserted. Not a relay to be found, not an inn inhabited. Not a horse in the stables. Not even a cat or a dog in the place. The orders of the Muscovite government had been executed with absolute strictness. All that could not be carried away had been destroyed.

On leaving Kamsk, Michael told Nadia and Nicholas that they would only find one small town of any importance, Nijni-Oudinsk, between that and Irkutsk. Nicholas replied that he knew there was a telegraph station in that town; therefore if Nijni-Oudinsk was abandoned like Kamsk, he would be obliged to seek some occupation in the capital of Eastern Siberia.

The kibitka could ford, without getting any damage, the little river which flows across the road beyond Kamsk. Between the Yeniseï and one of its great tributaries, the Angara, which waters Irkutsk, there was nothing to be feared from any stoppage caused by a river, unless it was the Dinka. But the journey would not be much delayed even by this.

From Kamsk to the next town was a long stage, nearly a hundred and thirty versts. It is needless to say that the regulation halts were observed, 'without which,' said Nicholas, 'they might have drawn upon themselves a just complaint on the part of the horse.' It had been agreed with the brave animal that he should

rest every fifteen versts; and when a contract is made, even with an animal, justice demands that the terms of it should be kept.

After crossing the little river Biriousa, the kibitka reached Biriousinsk on the morning of the 4th of September.

There, very fortunately, for Nicholas saw that his provisions were becoming exhausted, he found in an oven a dozen 'pogatchas,' a kind of cake prepared with sheep's fat and a large supply of plain boiled rice. This increase was very opportune, for something would soon have been needed to replace the koumyss with which the kibitka had been stored at Krasnoïarsk.

After a halt, the journey was continued in the afternoon. The distance to Irkutsk was not now more than five hundred versts. There was not a sign of the Tartar vanguard.

Michael Strogoff had some grounds for hoping that his journey would not be again delayed, and that in eight days, or at most ten, he would be in the presence of the Grand-Duke.

On leaving Biriousinsk a hare ran across the road, thirty feet in front of the kibitka.

'Ah!' exclaimed Nicholas.

'What is the matter, friend?' asked Michael quickly, like a blind man whom the least sound arouses.

'Did you not see . . .?' said Nicholas, whose bright face had become suddenly clouded. Then he added, 'Ah, no! you could not see, and it's lucky for you, little father!'

'But I saw nothing,' said Nadia.

'So much the better—so much the better! But I—I saw!'

'What was it then?' asked Michael.

'A hare crossing our road!' answered Nicholas.

In Russia, when a hare crosses the path of a traveller, the popular belief is that it is the sign of approaching evil.

Nicholas, superstitious like the greater number of Russians, had stopped the kibitka.

Michael understood his companion's hesitation, although he in no way shared his credulity as to hares passing, and he endeavoured to reassure him.

'There is nothing to fear, friend,' said he.

'Nothing for you, nor for her, I know, little father,' answered Nicholas; 'but for me. It is my fate,' he continued.

And he put his horse in motion again.

However, in spite of these forebodings the day passed without any accident.

At twelve o'clock the next day, the 6th of September, the kibitka halted in the village of Alsalevok, which was as deserted as all the surrounding country.

There, on a doorstep, Nadia found two of those strong-bladed knives used by Siberian hunters. She gave one to Michael, who concealed it among his clothes, and kept the other herself. They were now not more than seventy-five versts from Nijni-Oudinsk.

Nicholas had not recovered his usual spirits. The ill-omen had affected him more than could have been believed, and he who formerly was never half an hour without speaking, now fell into long reveries from which Nadia found it difficult to arouse him. His moody state may be accounted for when it is recollected that he was a man belonging to those northern races, whose superstitious ancestors have been the founders of the Hyperborean mythology.

On leaving Ekaterinburg, the Irkutsk road runs almost parallel

with the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, but from Biriousinsk it proceeds south-east, so as to slope across the hundredth meridian. It takes the shortest way to reach the Siberian capital by crossing the Sayansk mountains. These mountains are themselves but part of the great Altai chain, which are visible at a distance of two hundred versts.

The kibitka rolled swiftly along the road. Yes, swiftly! Nicholas no longer thought of being so careful of his horse, and was as anxious to arrive at his journey's end as Michael himself. Notwithstanding his fatalism, and though resigned, he would not believe himself in safety until within the walls of Irkutak. Many Russians would have thought as he did, and more than one would have turned his horse and gone back again, after a hare had crossed his path.

However, some observations made by him, the justice of which was proved by Nadia transmitting them to Michael, made them fear that their trials were not over.

Though the land from Krasnoïarsk had been respected in its natural productions, its forests now bore traces of fire and steel; the fields on each side of the road had been devastated, and it was evident that some large body of men had passed that way.

Thirty versts before Nijni-Oudinsk the indications of recent devastation could not be mistaken, and it was impossible to attribute them to others than the Tartars.

Indeed, it was not only that the fields were trampled by horses' feet, and that trees were cut down, the few houses scattered along the road were not only empty, some had been partly demolished, others half burnt down. The marks of bullets could be seen on their walls.

Michael's anxiety may be imagined. He could no longer doubt that a party of Tartars had recently passed that way, and yet it was impossible that they could be the Emir's soldiers, for they could not have passed without being seen. But then who were these new invaders, and by what out-of-the-way path across the steppe had they been able to join the high-road to Irkutak? With what new enemies was the Czar's courier now to meet?

Michael did not communicate his apprehensions either to Nicholas or Nadia, not wishing to make them uneasy. Besides, he had resolved to continue his way as long as no insurmountable obstacle stopped him. Later he would see what it was best to do.

During the ensuing day, the recent passage of a large body of foot and horse became more and more apparent. Smoke was seen above the horizon. The kibitka advanced cautiously. Several houses in deserted villages still burned, and they certainly could not have been set on fire more than four-and-twenty hours before.

At last, during the day of the 8th of September, the kibitka stopped suddenly. The horse refused to advance. Serko barked furiously.

'What is the matter?' asked Michael.

'A corpse!' replied Nicholas, who had leapt out of the kibitka.

The body was that of a moujik, horribly mutilated, and already cold.

Nicholas crossed himself. Then, aided by Michael, he carried the body to the side of the road. He would have liked to give it decent burial, that the wild beasts of the steppe might not feast on the miserable remains, but Michael could not allow him the time.

'Come, friend, come!' he ex-

claimed, 'we must not delay, even for an hour!'

And the kibitka was driven on.

Besides, if Nicholas had wished to render the last duties to all the dead bodies they were now to meet with on the Siberian high-road, he would have had enough to do! As they approached Nijni-Oudinsk, they were found by twenties stretched on the ground.

It was, however, necessary to follow this road, until it was manifestly impossible to do so longer without falling into the hands of the invaders. The road they were following could not be abandoned, and yet the signs of devastation and ruin increased at every village they passed through.

About four o'clock in the afternoon of this day, Nicholas caught sight of the tall steeples of the churches of Nijni-Oudinsk. Thick vapours, which could not be clouds, were floating around them.

Nicholas and Nadia looked and communicated the result of their observations to Michael. If, by some inexplicable manœuvre, the Tartars occupied the town, they must at every cost avoid the place.

'Advance cautiously,' said Michael, 'but advance!'

A verst was soon traversed.

'Those are not clouds; that is smoke!' exclaimed Nadia. 'Brother, they are burning the town!'

It was, indeed, only too plain. Flashes of light appeared in the midst of the vapour. It became thicker and thicker as it mounted upwards. There were no fugitives, however. The incendiaries had probably found the town deserted, and had set fire to it. But were they Tartars who had done this? They might be Russians obeying the orders of the Grand Duke. Had the government of the Czar determined that from Krasnoïarsk, from the Yeniseï, not a town, not

a village, should offer a refuge to the Emir's soldiers? What was Michael Strogoff to do—should he stop, or should he continue his journey?

He was undecided. However, having weighed the pros and cons, he thought that, whatever might be the difficulties of a journey across the steppes without a beaten path, he ought not to risk falling a second time into the hands of the Tartars. He was just proposing to Nicholas to leave the road, and, unless absolutely necessary, not resume it until Nijni-Oudinsk had been passed, when a shot was heard on their right. A ball whistled, and the horse of the kibitka fell dead, shot through the head.

At the same moment a dozen horsemen dashed forward, and the kibitka was surrounded.

Before they knew where they were, Michael, Nadia, and Nicholas were prisoners, and being dragged rapidly towards Nijni-Oudinsk.

Michael, in this second attack, had lost none of his presence of mind. Being unable to see his enemies, he had not thought of defending himself. Even had he possessed the use of his eyes, he would not have attempted it; the consequences would have been his death and that of his companions. But though he could not see, he could listen and understand what was said.

From their language he found that these soldiers were Tartars, and from their words that they preceded the invading army.

In short, what Michael learnt from the talk at the present moment, as well as from the scraps of conversation he overheard later, was this:

These men were not under the direct orders of the Emir, who was now detained beyond the Yeniseï. They made part of a third column,

chiefly composed of Tartars from the khanates of Khokand and Koondooz, with which Feofar's army was to effect a junction in the neighbourhood of Irkutsk.

By Ivan Ogareff's advice, and in order to assure the success of the invasion in the eastern provinces, this column, after crossing the frontier of the government of Semipalatinsk and passing to the south of Lake Balkhash, had skirted the base of the Altai mountains. Pillaging and ravaging under the leadership of an officer of the Khan of Koondooz, it had reached the upper course of the Yenisei. There, guessing what had been done at Krasnoiarsk by order of the Czar, and to facilitate the passage of the river to the Emir's troops, this officer had launched a flotilla of boats, which, either as barges or by affording materials for a bridge, would enable Feofar to cross and resume the road to Irkutsk. Having done this, it had descended the valley of the Yenisei, and struck the road on a level with Alsalevsk. From this little town began the frightful course of ruin which forms the chief part of Tartar warfare. Nijni-Oudinsk had shared the common fate, and the Tartars, to the number of fifty thousand, had already quitted it to take up a position before Irkutsk. Before long they would be reinforced by the Emir's troops.

Such was the state of affairs at this date, most serious for this isolated part of Eastern Siberia, and for the comparatively few defenders of its capital.

All this Michael learnt. The arrival before Irkutsk of a third column of Tartars, and the approaching junction of the Emir and Ivan Ogareff with the bulk of their troops; consequently the investment of Irkutsk, and after that its surrender, would only be

an affair of time, perhaps of a very short time.

It can be imagined with what thoughts Michael's mind was now occupied. Who could have been astonished had he, in his present situation, lost all hope and all courage? Nothing of the sort, however; his lips muttered no other words than these,

'I will get there!'

Half an hour after the attack of the Tartar horsemen Michael Strogoff, Nadia, and Nicholas entered Nijni-Oudinsk. The faithful dog followed them, though at a distance. They could not stay in the town, as it was in flames and about to be left by the last of the marauders.

The prisoners were therefore thrown on horses and hurried away: Nicholas resigned as usual; Nadia, her faith in Michael unshaken; and Michael himself, apparently indifferent, but ready to seize any opportunity of escaping.

The Tartars were not long in perceiving that one of their prisoners was blind, and their natural barbarity led them to make game of their unfortunate victim. They were travelling fast. Michael's horse, having no one to guide him, often started aside, and so made confusion among the ranks; this drew on his rider such abuse and brutality as wrung Nadia's heart, and filled Nicholas with indignation. But what could they do? They could not speak the Tartar language, and their assistance was mercilessly refused.

Soon it occurred to these men, in a refinement of cruelty, to exchange the horse Michael was riding for one which was blind. The motive for the change was explained by a remark which Michael overheard,

'Perhaps that Russian can see, after all!'

Thus was passed sixty versts from Nijni-Oudinsk, through the villages of Tatan and Chibarlinskoi. Michael had been placed on this horse, and the reins ironically put into his hand. Then, by dint of lashing, throwing stones, and shouting, the animal was urged into a gallop.

The horse, not being guided by his rider, blind as himself, sometimes ran into a tree, sometimes went quite off the road; in consequence, collisions and falls, which might have been extremely dangerous.

Michael did not complain; not a murmur escaped him. When his horse fell, he waited until it got up. It was, indeed, soon assisted up, and the cruel fun continued.

At sight of this wicked treatment, Nicholas could not contain himself; he endeavoured to go to his friend's aid. He was prevented and treated brutally.

This game would have been prolonged, to the Tartars' great amusement, had not a serious accident put an end to it.

On the 10th of September the blind horse ran away, and made straight for a pit, some thirty or forty feet deep, at the side of the road.

Nicholas tried to go after him; he was held back. The horse, having no guide, fell with his rider to the bottom of the cliff.

Nicholas and Nadia uttered a piercing cry. They believed that their unfortunate companion had been killed in the fall.

However, when they went to his assistance, it was found that Michael, having been able to throw himself out of the saddle, was unhurt; but the miserable horse had two legs broken, and was quite useless.

He was left there to die without being put out of his suffering,

and Michael, fastened to a Tartar's saddle, was obliged to follow the detachment on foot.

Even now not a protest, not a complaint. He marched with a rapid step, scarcely drawn by the cord which tied him. He was still 'the man of iron' of whom General Kissoff had spoken to the Czar.

The next day, the 11th of September, the detachment passed through the village of Chibarlinskoi. Here an incident occurred which had serious consequences.

It was nightfall. The Tartar horsemen, having halted, were more or less intoxicated. They were about to start.

Nadia, who till then, by a miracle, had been respectfully treated by the soldiers, was insulted by one of them.

Michael could not see the insult, nor the insulter; but Nicholas saw for him.

Then quietly, without thinking, without perhaps knowing what he was doing, Nicholas walked straight up to the man, and before the latter could make the least movement to stop him, had seized a pistol from his holster, and discharged it full at his breast.

The officer in command of the detachment hastened up on hearing the report.

The soldiers would have cut the unfortunate Nicholas to pieces, but at a sign from their officer he was bound instead, placed across a horse, and the detachment galloped off.

The rope which fastened Michael, gnawed through by him, broke by the sudden start of the horse, and the half-tipsy rider galloped on without perceiving that his prisoner had escaped.

Michael and Nadia found themselves alone on the road.

(To be continued.)

THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.

CHAPTER VI.

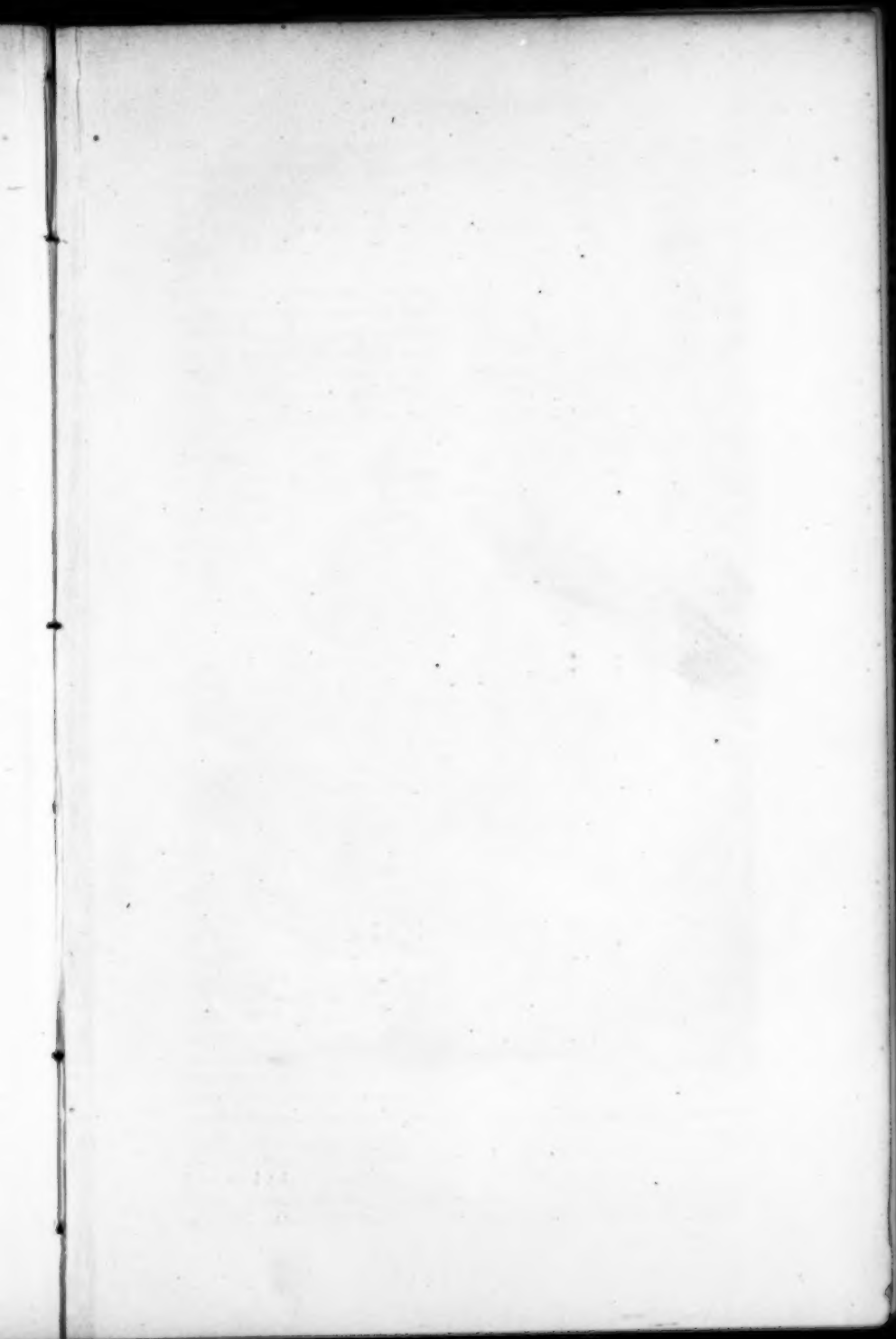
THE SHEPHERDESS.

WHEN his relations had driven off, Lieutenant Frank Wyatt took a cigar, and wandered round about the old place—into the yard, down the avenue, about the meadows, where pretty pale crocus-flowers carpeted the ground. Indian corn grew there too, with its long stalk and leaves, and the great head pushing its way upwards. The poplars rustled beside the river, the fish dived and darted along under the shadow of the weeds. The whole place lay perfectly still in the afternoon sun, like 'a haunt of ancient peace,' a silent sleepy Arcadia. Unless one is brought face to face with them by some personal experience, it is almost impossible to believe that these French country landscapes can be the scene in present times of war and revolution. Old feudal struggles there may have been; that old château on the hill may have sent out smoke and fire from the gun-holes in its walls; but all that was hundreds of years ago. Now the place lies open and secure, without even the protection of a single gate, from the entrance of the avenue to the terrace and the house-door. Yet within the memory of children Prussian soldiers have clattered down through the village of Sonnay-sous-Carillon, which lies close to Les Sapinières; and within the memory of men there have been burnings and revolutions; and those who live now confidently expect to see more of such things before they die.

Frank wandered about very

agreeably to himself. His artistic mind understood and enjoyed the beauty round him. Perhaps it needs as fine a faculty to see and appreciate this kind of beauty as to sit gazing in rapture at mountains or the sea. The poplars by the little river, with their silver stems and light leaves that shadowed and flickered and rustled with every softest breath of air; the blue clear sky shining through them; the slowly-running water, blue, silver, brown, green, in its gentle reflections; the meadows emerald green. Frank found several lovely subjects for sketches down here in the low ground, and also discovered a pretty view of the château, and another of the church-spire rising among trees. He had an idea, which I think shows that there was something in him of the true artist, that Nature in her every-day work is even more worth copying than in her grand efforts. Poets and wise men have said very truly that we miss the beauty that lies about our feet. It is true concerning more things than water and grass and trees; but as far as these went, at least, Frank was not one of the blind.

Presently he walked up into the meadow near the house, where the shepherdess had just brought her flock for their afternoon graze. This was not one of those *bergères* proper to Arcadia and the Muses, with a round straw hat and a crook. La Mère Chapin was a little withered old woman, active, upright, and shrewd, with a tight white cap, a short jacket and petticoat, bare brown legs like





'The treasure, monsieur ! It lies where Monsieur le Baron and my poor uncle buried it.'

See 'The Dreamland of Love.'

two sticks, and dark-brown worsted socks under her sabots. Her rough-haired dog was in attendance; and as she watched the sheep, she was hard at work all the time with her distaff and spindle.

'Bon jour, monsieur,' said she, with a laugh in her black eyes, as Frank, in his gray clothes, looking very fair and languid, came sauntering up the meadow.

'Bon jour,' said Frank, taking off his hat with a smile.

'Monsieur has recovered from his journey? Ah, dame! those railways are tiring enough in such weather as this. And monsieur came from a great distance.'

'From Paris, yesterday; but before that I came from England. That is a long journey.'

'England! Yes, indeed, I have heard the name of that place before. And the sheep in England, monsieur, are they as fine as these?'

'There are many different kinds,' said Frank, 'some larger, and some smaller. Where do these come from?'

When once La Chapin had started on the subject of her sheep, nothing could stop her. They were her children, her darlings. She ran on for some time about them, giving Frank, who was not learned in sheep, more information than he chose to show. As soon as he could get a word in, he began asking her about the place: had she lived there long in the service of Mme. la Comtesse? This was another of La Chapin's pet topics. She had lived at Sonnay all her life, and her parents before her. They were there all through the great Revolution; but monsieur must understand that they were good people in those times when all the world was wicked.

'Madame's family was not here then?' Frank suggested.

'Certainly not. M. le Baron de Sonnay and his wife and daughter—voilà tout. Ah, dame! ce pauvre monsieur, it was a terrible time for him. He sent the ladies out of the country, and remained himself at the château with his valet-de-chambre—and that was my uncle, Jean Pichard, my father's brother. But perhaps monsieur has heard the story?'

'No, never,' said Frank.

'M. le Baron was rich, and the best master and the best friend in the world. He had also great treasures of silver and gold, dishes and vases, spoons and forks, and all kinds of things that monsieur can imagine. Allons! he determined to hide all this, and in fact he and Jean Pichard buried the whole somewhere about the château. He wrote to madame his wife, and told her that he had done this. He said it was quite safe, for no one but himself and Pichard knew the place. Ah, it was safe indeed! A few weeks after, ce pauvre Monsieur le Baron was guillotined. And as if that was not enough, my uncle Pichard was shot by some wicked soldiers that passed through the place. So both of them died, and neither knew of the death of the other.'

'That was strange,' said Frank. 'And the treasure?'

'The treasure, monsieur! It lies where Monsieur le Baron and my poor uncle buried it.'

'And no one has searched for it?'

'Si,' said La Chapin, laughing. 'Everybody has searched for it, but nobody has found it. If Madame la Comtesse would take the advice of her servants, she would dig over the whole estate. But she does not trouble herself about it, any more than I do about the stones on the road yonder.'

'Who lived here after M. de Sonnay? Did his wife and daughter ever come back?'

'Never, monsieur. Their property was taken from them, ces pauvres dames, and they both died at some place a long way off. Julie Robert, the femme-de-chambre, came back here and told us that they were dead. I remember that myself. But the château was sold to a little farmer of the neighbourhood, un homme de rien, and he lived there, little miserable, till M. le Comte, the husband of madame, bought the place.'

'If the treasure was found, it would belong to madame,' Frank half soliloquised.

'Ah, dame! oui,' said the shepherdess, nodding her head violently.

'A couple of francs would not do her any harm, I suppose,' thought the young man; and he pulled them out accordingly.

La Chapin's gratitude was almost tearful; she promised to pray for him; and Frank, very well satisfied, wished her 'bon soir,' and walked off towards the house.

He waited for his friends on the terrace, but they did not arrive till nearly dinner-time; and at dinner they were full of Château Lauron and the De Valmonts.

'We have a great many neighbours in this country, and a very agreeable society,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire; 'but only two of these families still retain the property they had before the Revolution. Les Rochemar live still at the Château de Rochemar, and Lauron has always been one of the châteaux of the Valmont family. They lost the old Château de Valmont in Touraine; in fact, it was burnt to the ground, and the property was taken from them.'

'Are they rich?' said Agnes.

'Yes, they have a good property; but they have spent a great deal in restoring their château and other ways. M. de Valmont's father was an extravagant man, and lived a great deal in Paris. He thinks himself very prudent, for he has undertaken several strange things. He has a share in a shipbuilding firm at Brest, and in a great bank somewhere else.'

'I did not know that a French gentleman would ever have anything to do with such bourgeois concerns as those,' said Frank, laughing.

'M. de Valmont has many English ideas,' said the Comtesse. 'Not that he would ever go so far as some of your noblesse, who turn their sons into merchants, if what I hear is true: but he thinks that a man of his birth can do anything that is not sordid, without in the least affecting his position. You think him right, do you not?'

'Perfectly right,' said Frank.

'I thought he seemed to have a great deal of sense,' added Johnny.

'You may well say so. Ah, Frank, your brother has won all the De Valmont hearts. You ought to have been there; you have lost your chance. He kissed Mme. de Valmont's hand as if he had been born a Frenchman.'

'That was Johnny in a new light, certainly.'

'I couldn't help it,' said Johnny, in an undertone.

'Cécile thought him very gentle,' said Marie. 'She told me so.'

'I thought her very pretty—very beautiful,' said the sailor, with the slow quiet decision which always made his brother laugh.

'Yes, she is charming,' said Marie. 'I suppose her mother will soon marry her. Do you know, grand'mère?'

'At present there is nothing

beyond an idea,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'A young M. de Marillac has been proposed to her lately; but the affair will not be settled in any way till they go to Paris. He will have a large fortune, they say. But you must not say a word of this, my children.'

'It will be strange if little Cécile is married,' said Marie; 'only the other day she was a child. But I think she will love her husband and be very happy.'

Agnes watched Marie as she spoke, but could not discern any particular horror at the prospect of her own fate. Evidently her view was that one must be married, and as to loving one's husband, that was an additional blessing to be hoped for.

After having their coffee on the terrace, Mme. de Saint-Hilaire and Peloton were inclined for a turn in the moonlit avenue, and Frank walked off with them, leaving Johnny to entertain the two girls.

Frank had a talent for amusing and making friends with old ladies, which is sometimes a very amiable talent, but at other times has a decided background of selfishness. I do not wish, however, to judge him before the time, or to say that he did not walk after Mme. de Saint-Hilaire for her own sake. He told her about his doings in the afternoon, and alluded to the shepherdess's story of the buried treasure.

'La Chapin's favourite story,' said the Comtesse. 'Ah, yes, they want me to pull down the terrace, to undermine the house, to dig holes and burrow in all my fields—in fact, to spend the treasure before I find it. But I am not rich enough for those amusements.'

'Still it would be worth finding,' said Frank.

'That is very likely. But you have no idea how many stories of this kind there are in the country—legends of the Revolution. At any rate, it must remain hidden as long as I live. When the place goes to Marie she and her husband can do as they please.'

'I could not live here without certainty of some kind,' said Frank.

'You English are so curious, with your active minds and bodies,' laughed Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, her quick wits failing for once to follow the train of thought in her companion's mind. 'However, M. de Rochemar is already so rich that I think he will be contented with the estate, and what chance may bring him beyond it. He is of a quiet nature too, and would not care for the trouble of setting people to dig for a chimera.'

'And who may he be, this M. de Rochemar?' asked Frank rather wondering.

'Tiens! Nobody has told you? What silent young people these are! Your sister Agnes might have been brought up in a convent of Dames Carmelites. M. de Rochemar is Marie's fiancé.'

'Indeed! Has she been engaged to him long?'

'Since yesterday. His mother and I have arranged it for them. The Marquis himself is in Algeria with his regiment, but he is expected home soon.'

'They are acquainted, I suppose?' said Frank.

'They saw each other some years ago; but most of the acquaintance is yet to come. His mother is a friend of mine, and we have always known the family.'

Frank paused a minute, and then laughed.

'I hope it is a very happy arrangement for her,' he said. 'Your

marriages in France are a little startling, when one is not used to them.'

'It is very possible,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire; 'but in this case, I assure you, nothing could be happier.'

CHAPTER VII.

SETTING SUNS.

In spite of buried treasures and mariages de convenance, these young English people managed to make themselves very happy in this French life, so delightfully different from their own at home. Everything was free, picturesque, and natural, and without the stiffness which so often spoils English country society. In that charming part of France, at this time of year especially, everybody is enjoying château-life, visiting friends without formality, riding, driving, dancing, shooting, taking walks in the beautiful valleys, sitting out at night in the clear, warm, dry air; dressing as one pleases, without any trouble of bonnets or kid-gloves.

Agnes Wyatt accommodated herself to all this very easily, left her new bonnet in its box, and bought some comfortable gants de Suède in the little town of Carillon—did her best, in fact, to turn herself into a Frenchwoman, and gained great credit from the neighbouring ladies for her pretty toilettes and nice attentive manners. Her brothers also became very popular; Frank, of course, without any effort of his own. Johnny brightened up wonderfully, partly from his intercourse with the De Valmont family, whom he thought the most delightful people he had ever met in his life. He might well think so, for Mme. de Valmont, who was a woman of the world, and knew

courts and their ways, paid him more amiable attention than she would ever have thought of bestowing on a young countryman of her own. Johnny was quietly devoted to her and her daughter, though he had not much to say to Mdlle. Cécile, who, like a French girl, withdrew herself and kept silence, listening to her mother's agreeable conversation with laughing eyes of fun and sympathy.

Marie de Saint-Hilaire, being older, was much more talkative, and in her small way shared the rule of house and village with her grandmother. She got her own way in things by showing little tempers whenever she was opposed, but she was generally very lively and amiable, though easily upset and annoyed, and inclined to be fussy. Her face in repose had always a tinge of sadness; perhaps this was owing to delicacy of health. But she was extremely charitable; the servants loved her, though she scolded them, and her kindnesses in the village were unnumbered. Of course her education had been most carefully looked after, and thus she had read very little of her native literature. Her ideas did not stray far beyond *La Femme Forte*, *La Femme Sainte*, *La Femme Chrétienne*, *Lives of the Saints*, Mme. Craven's books, and those wonderful exalted French biographies which seem to be written on purpose to keep young women like her in the right way. Of course she was also a passionate Legitimist, and would have given all she possessed to help on the Carlists to victory. But this enthusiasm of hers was not roused to action, and at present her chief interest was the establishment of two Sisters of Charity in the village—one to visit and nurse the sick, and the other to teach the children. She walked down

nearly every day, now generally taking Agnes with her, to the little house in the village street. There she went in and talked to the Sister in the midst of her small flock, made remarks on this and that little girl—the boys went to the communal school—then climbed the narrow staircase to the kitchen. *Sœur Lucie*, if she was there, would come forward in her black gown and great flapping cap, set chairs for the ladies, and give her report of the sick and old and needy, for whom she did all sorts of nice little cookeries on her small stove. Very often Marie and Agnes brought a basket of fruit with them from the château garden, which the Sister unpacked with her quick neat fingers, pleasantly smiling and chattering all the time. Agnes watched and listened, and thought it all very good, and sighed as she remembered English villages where there was no *Sœur Lucie* or anybody else to look after the poor, except those euphuistically called their 'guardians.'

The fat old curé, with his honest face, went about the village, and beamed with benevolence on Marie when he met her. Just now a mutual anxiety bound all these people together. A dear little girl of eight years old was very ill; she had caught cold in harvest-time, and now seemed to be in a rapid consumption. Her name was Anaïs Robert. She was a saint, never known to be naughty, and what made her approaching death sad was that she was the only child of one of the greatest reprobates in Sonnay, a Republican, and a person altogether good for nothing. This child never ceased trying to convert her father, who listened to her and to no one else. Actually she had brought him once to church, just before she was

taken ill—a thing never accomplished by her mother, who, though a good Christian, was a poor weak woman. Agnes heard a great deal of talk about this little Anaïs, and one Sunday she saw a whole row of young girls, who sat on the front bench of the church, kneeling through part of the mass with their heads bent and scraps of lighted taper in their hands. One by one the tapers went out, and they rose from their knees.

'Ah,' said Marie afterwards, 'they were praying for that poor little one. I am afraid she is dying.'

In the afternoon, after vespers, they heard that the child was dead, and Marie cried a little, not, as she explained to Agnes, for the happy young saint, but for 'ce pauvre Robert,' who would have no one now to bring him to church.

These things seemed to interest Marie a great deal more than her engagement to M. de Rochemar, though one afternoon her grandmother took her alone in the carriage to pay a visit to her future mother-in-law. They brought back an invitation from the Marquise for them all to dine with her one day in the following week. The De Valmonts were to be there too, and Mme. de Rochemar, who was fond of society, hoped to have some of her relations and friends staying at the château.

In the mean while the days passed on pleasantly at Les Sapinières. Frank, who had begun by being lazy and dawdling about the neighbourhood with his sketch-book, or reading in the high cushioned windows of the library, where he found a very fine collection of French books, took it into his head to teach Marie to ride. She was rather nervous, though not really afraid; so he

mounted her on the quiet old white mare who used to go shopping to Carillon, her maid Louise took the bridle, and away they went together about the lanes and woods and vineyards in those clear golden afternoons, Blanche stepping deliberately with the light little figure on her back, and Frank walking by the side, ready to guide her over any difficult place.

Johnny was away on his own concerns, or perhaps fast asleep somewhere, and Agnes was attending on her aunt as she walked about the farm and superintended her people. Nobody thought of interfering with Marie's doings; she was no longer a child, and the young Englishman was her cousin; and besides, her grandmother and every one else was accustomed to her independent ways.

A low wind rustled through the pine-woods that afternoon, bringing out their health-giving scent, making music in the upper branches, that sighed at its least breath. As that little cavalcade from the château turned into the wood, the stems were all glowing red in the sinking sunlight, and the carpet of purple heather glowed too, as if all the ground was blushing. They went along the soft path, across a corner of the wood, till they suddenly came out beyond it into a full view of the western sky, where the sun was slowly descending, and clouds of all shapes, sharply cut upon the clear background, some all red or gold, some dark with a gold edge, lay stretched along the sky. Down from their feet fell the steep slope of a vineyard, golden green; then there were masses of trees, with the bright thread of a river in the valley; then poplar-tops, all rosy, woods and slopes again, and a glimpse of distant country, through a break in the high

ground, fading away into a mist of glory.

Blanche pricked her ears, as Frank laid his hand on the bridle and stopped her in face of this view, just where the wood-path ended and the road through the vineyard began. Louise nodded and laughed, and turned back into the wood to gather a bunch of heather.

'Ah, that is pretty,' said Marie. 'I assure you that I never saw this before.'

'I am not very much astonished,' said Frank; 'but I am glad you like it. I never heard you admire nature before. What does this view make you think of?'

He stood stroking the mare's neck and looking up at Marie, with his back to the view. She brought her eyes from it, and met his, smiling and hesitating a little.

'But, Frank—I don't know,' she said. 'Paradise, perhaps; but that is not what you are thinking of.'

'No. The effect of a beautiful sight like this on me is always to make me think of what I love best in the world. If it is a long way off, so much the worse; it is nothing but a dream. If I can turn round and look at it, so much the better. What do you think of that?'

'Very pretty, only I am not sure that I understand you,' said Marie. But her eyes were gone back to the clouds, and Frank did not explain himself. Only he muttered under his breath, 'Tant mieux!'

'We don't care for the view after all, do we?' he said, in quite a different voice. 'At least I see that it takes your thoughts far enough away from here. Where are they gone, tell me? To Paradise, or to Algeria, or only as far as Rochemar?'

'You are very strange this evening,' said Marie, suddenly looking him straight in the face. 'Is that the way you talk in England?'

'Not at all. Forgive me,' said Frank. 'But certainly it is a roundabout way of talking, and I have to do something which is difficult to me, my dear cousin. You may not believe me, but it is very difficult. I have to offer you my best wishes on your engagement. Will you accept them?'

'Thank you,' said Marie gravely.

The congratulation had been oddly put, certainly, and at that moment, drooping a little over Blanche's mane, with her pensive eyes and pale face, she did not look as if any great happiness was shining before her. But she smiled again the next moment.

'You will see Mme. de Rochemar on Wednesday,' she said. 'She is so good to me. And the château is beautiful.'

Frank was half pleased and half angry with her for ignoring his foolish hints, but the pleasure was strongest, because at that stage he admired her the more for it.

'Beautifully done, little Marie,' he thought to himself; 'if you are a victim, you are a very brave one.'

He recovered himself, and asked a few questions about Rochemar.

Louise, presently returning, led Blanche on through the vineyard.

The sun was just setting, when, having made a round, they came down a lane shaded by walnut-trees into the yard of the château. As they passed the old farm-buildings he said, almost in spite of himself,

'Then you are going to be very happy. I may be quite sure of that?'

'How can I tell?' said Marie. 'You can ask me again in ten years.'

'Ah, is that it?' said Frank.

It always seemed to be his duty to amuse them in the salon in the evening, by reading or singing or talking. Marie generally sat near him, and laughingly corrected his French now and then; but that night she was rather silent, and wrapped up in an enormous piece of tapestry. Frank fetched *Les Feuilles d'Automne* from the library, and read 'Soleils Couchants' while she and Agnes worked. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, who did not care for poetry, at least for that kind, sat half asleep in one of the great fauteuils by the chimneypiece; and Johnny, half listening, and slowly turning over an illustrated history of the war, leaned his elbow on the table, and pushed his fingers through his curls. It was a grave quiet little group, with chairs drawn up in a circle round the shaded lamp in the middle of the great glittering shadowy room.

'Why don't you sing?' said Johnny, looking up when his brother stopped, and Marie's little dark head was still bent over her worsteds. 'One can't stand too much of that sort of thing. Mademoiselle, do put your great work away, and let us have the pleasure of hearing your voice. We have plenty of Frank at home.'

Marie raised her eyes slowly, and looked at Frank. He was leaning back with the book in his hand, murmuring something to himself.

'O, sur des ailes, dans les nues,
Laissez-moi fuir, laissez-moi fuir!
Loin des régions inconnues
C'est assez rêver et languir!'

'Come, old fellow, answer when you're looked at,' said Johnny; and Frank seemed to wake; he raised his eyes too, and smiled at Marie.

'Yes, let us have some music,'

he said. 'Agnes, you can play for Marie.'

'You must help me,' said Marie, as she rolled up her work.

'Yes, if you like.'

Agnes went and took her place at the piano, and Marie got into the corner between her and the wall, while Frank stayed outside, to superintend the music. They sang very charmingly together, all sorts of pretty chansons, which Marie had learnt from time to time, and her cousins caught up at once. There were 'Le Montagnard Emigré,' 'Sans Amour,' 'La Patrie des Hirondelles,' and many others, and then some Italian opera songs, which Mme. de Saint-Hilaire woke up and asked for. Marie stood against the wall in the corner, looking straight before her, sometimes moving her hands gently in time to the music, and singing like a bird, without trouble or effort, in a sweet clear voice.

'There, that is enough,' she said at last suddenly. 'This singing tires me to death. I would rather dance. What do you say, Agnes? Allons, grand-mère'—gliding out of her place, half kneeling before the Comtesse, and laying her hands on hers—'you are going to play us a polka, n'est-ce pas?'

'What! with my old fingers?' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'Certainly. Agnes, give up your place. Johnny, will you have the goodness to put those chairs on one side?'

Agnes thought she had never seen her little cousin in such high spirits; but she, like every one else, was quite ready to please her. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire played her polka with as much correctness and spirit as a girl of twenty, and followed it up with a valse and another polka. There was not much choice of partners,

but all these four were good dancers, and went spinning delightfully round and round the smooth floor. Marie danced the first two with Frank, and the last with Johnny, who did not enjoy the change.

'Agnes dances like a sensible English girl,' he said afterwards; 'but that little thing is just like an eel. She goes wriggling round and round, and it is as much as one can do to keep up with her.'

That night, when Agnes was leaning out of her window into the still glorious world outside, there was a gentle knock at the door, and Marie came in, with all her long black hair down.

'Are you looking at the stars?' she said, pulling a chair up to the window. 'You English are always looking at something. As for me, I have plenty to think of without setting suns and moons and clouds. Sit down, ma chère. I want to ask you a little question.'

'What is it, my child?' said Agnes, bending over her and kissing her forehead.

'Ah, it is very kind of you to embrace me, but you will perhaps be vexed at my question. Forgive me, but are you engaged?'

'No,' Agnes answered, a little gravely; not that she minded the question, but she was rather afraid of what might be coming next.

'Why not, I wonder?' said Marie. 'Ever since you came it has been a mystery to me why your mother has not married you long before this. You don't wish to marry, then?'

'I do not say that. I do not trouble myself or think much about it. If I met with any one I cared for, I suppose altogether a married life is the happiest—at least it ought to be.'

'Was any one ever proposed to you that you did not like?'

'Yes, once. He proposed himself, you know, in our English fashion.'

'And why did you not marry him? Was he ugly, disagreeable, poor?' asked Marie, with an appearance of great interest.

'No, none of those. He was rather good-looking, on the contrary; many people thought him very agreeable, and he had a large fortune.'

'Then, my dear, what can have been your reason?'

'I did not care for him.'

'And he was satisfied with that?'

'He was obliged to be satisfied,' said Agnes, smiling. 'He was not a man that I liked. From things I heard, I believe he was not a very good man,' she added, glad to find a reason that Marie could understand.

'Ah, that was something. That was your reason, no doubt. If he had been good, you would have married him?'

Agnes paused a moment. 'No, I should not.'

'Ma chère, you would not? But you are unreasonable. What could you expect?'

'Only one little thing, but that was quite enough. If I had loved him better than any one else in the world, I should not have asked whether he was handsome, or how much money he had, or any of those things. I should have married him for himself. Do you see?'

'Ah, those are your ideas,' said Marie. She was silent for a long time, leaning her head against her cousin's shoulder, and gazing out, in spite of herself, at the stars. 'Listen, Agnes,' she said, in a low plaintive voice; 'I don't understand what you mean by loving any one in that way.'

VOL. XXXI. NO. CLXXXII.

There is something frightening in it. I think they are often very bad people who love like that. Women run away from their husbands sometimes because they love somebody else like that—*n'est-ce pas?* It frightens me to think of it. I am sure it must be very bad.'

'Or very good,' said Agnes gently. 'The best and most beautiful thing in the world, if it is given to the right person.'

'I don't like it. It is too much—it is unreasonable,' said Marie. 'Look at me. I am going to be married to Louis de Rochemar. *Mon amie*, you do not suppose that I love him like that?'

'No, I suppose not. How should you? You know nothing of him. But perhaps you may, by and by.'

'It is possible. But no—I remember him too well to make a romance about him. But do you understand? We shall do very well without your tiresome love. If I loved any one, I should be always dying of jealousy. I can imagine nothing more ennuyant. But Louis is good, and amiable, and agreeable, and rich. He will give me all the money and everything else I want, and will let me do exactly as I please. I shall talk to him, and sing to him; and he will listen, and will tell me his affairs when he wants my advice. We shall be good friends, never interfere with each other, please ourselves, and be very happy. *Allons!* what do you say to that?'

'It does sound as if you would be very happy,' said Agnes.

'To be sure. I tell you I shall. I want nothing better. If he had been disagreeable, I should have told my grandmother that I would not be engaged to him. But every one praises him. So

M

good-night, and sleep well, my dear cousin. Do not spend the whole night in looking at those stupid stars.'

Marie got up, shook back her hair, kissed Agnes on both cheeks, and hurried away.

'What can the child have meant by talking to me in that way?' thought Agnes, when she was left alone. 'Something must have shaken her a little in her national ideas, and she must have wanted to reassure herself. Well, I suppose there are happy French marriages, and I hope hers may be one of them. Was it wrong of me to let her see that there are different ideas in the world? No, I think not. It is best that she should know all about it beforehand.'

CHAPTER VIII.

ROCHEMAR.

THE Château de Rochemar stood on high ground above the bank of a river, not a little stream like that at Sonnay, but one of the large tributaries of Madame Loire, flowing broad and clear and full of fish through the favoured country. It had been a strong castle, commanding the river approach to the town of Carillon, had stood sieges from the English, and had been taken and retaken in many feudal struggles. Through the great Revolution the family had remained there, the Marquis of those days being so dearly loved by all the neighbourhood that nothing could persuade people to rise against him; and altogether the red storm had not swept so fiercely over Anjou as over places more civilised and more in the world. The present Marquise would have defended her château, if she could, against the Germans; but as that

was impossible she received them politely, and so escaped with nothing worse than a clearance of most of her furniture and the suffering of every kind of discomfort while they remained there.

Frank Wyatt looked out of the carriage window as they drove up that evening, and saw the great white towers with their gray caps crowning the hill in the twilight, the rows of windows with Renaissance decorations, the arched gateway under which they entered the *cour d'honneur*.

'Here you see the home of Marie,' Mme. de Saint-Hilaire whispered to him, as they went into the hall. 'What do you think of it? Have I done well for the child?'

'It is quite magnificent,' said Frank. 'These people must be very rich.'

'Yes, indeed. And if you had seen all this after the Prussians left! Ah, I cannot tell you. The restoration is perfectly wonderful.'

'It must be,' said Frank. He glanced round at Marie, who was following with Agnes and Johnny.

She looked a little flushed and excited, and was pointing things out as they passed in her quick way—the inlaid furniture that seemed to match the beautiful floors, the handsome *jardinières* holding great shadowing ferns and tropical plants, the painted ceilings, the reflection of themselves in the tall mirrors as they went by. It was in one of these that she saw Frank turn round and look at her as she glided along, with her white train sweeping, and pink oleanders in her hair, a delicate, sylph-like little figure in the great bright *salle*. She turned away from the glass and looked at him, smiling in a sort of triumph, as much as to say, 'Is not this worth having?' If she could have understood his answer, it would

certainly have been, 'Well, if you think so. But you can't have everything. For instance, would M. de Rochemar appear to very great advantage in that mirror? Might it not be better to be proud of your husband than of his house?'

The salon into which they went was furnished in Louis Quinze style, with beautiful old white flowery brocade on the white-and-gold chairs. Mme. de Rochemar, very handsomely dressed in pale lilac satin, came forward to meet them, and bowed in the most gracious manner to the young English people. Her friends who were in the room came up and talked to them—M. and Mme. de l'Allier, and 'les petits de Rochemar,' two nice-looking lads of eighteen and twenty. M. de l'Allier was gray and stiff-looking, and had not much to say; his wife was fat, handsome, and agreeable. She began at once talking English to Agnes. Mme. de Rochemar, in the mean while, sat down between Marie and her grandmother, and talked as fast as possible, waving her hands, and throwing her fan backwards and forwards. Frank, as he stood by, heard compliments flying in showers. Down came the light touch of Mme. de Rochemar's fingers on Marie's sleeve.

'Ma chère petite, quelle jolie toilette! Mais c'est ravissante! You have perfect taste. And those pretty flowers in your hair, the very things to suit you best. Ah, how charmed I am to have you here beside me—n'est-ce pas, madame? And your English cousins—it must be very interesting to have them with you. They are charming, no doubt. I have scarcely spoken to them. Monsieur!'

'Come here, Frank,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'You are pleased with France, I hope, monsieur?'

'Madame,' said Frank, 'it is the most charming country I ever was in.'

This was a very good beginning. Mme. de Rochemar was a thorough and devoted Frenchwoman, and her face lighted up at once with pleasure. So the cross-fire of compliments went on, at which Frank could have laughed heartily if he had not been engaged in it. The Marquise, Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, Marie, himself, each received a large share, and the Englishman was not at all behindhand in paying them. But this game did not last long, for some other guests were announced, and Frank drew back as Mme. de Rochemar got up to receive them. She found time for an aside to Mme. de Saint-Hilaire: 'Heavens! how handsome he is!'

'Did I tell you?' said the Comtesse, nodding.

'And so well brought up! Charmant, charmant!'

She went forward with a smiling face to receive Mme. de Valmont, who was followed into the room by her husband, her daughter, and eldest son. These ladies were rather plainly dressed, the Marquise in black silk, and her daughter in soft white muslin; but velvet, satin, diamonds, all the milliners and jewellers in Paris could not have made them look handsomer or more distinguished: so thought Johnny Wyatt, at least, as with suddenly awakened eyes he saw them come into the room. When Mdlle. de Valmont sat down near her mother, a little outside the grand circle into which everybody seemed to be forming themselves, he moved quietly round and placed himself at the back of her chair. She turned round, smiling, to shake hands with him; and then Mme. de Valmont suddenly looked up and saw him, and stretched out her hand too.

'Pardon! Where were you hiding yourself? I did not see you before.'

Presently she beckoned him close to her, and asked who that young man was, standing near Mme. de Rochemar.

'That is my brother,' said Johnny.

'Your brother! Indeed! Then there is no resemblance.'

'None at all,' said Johnny, half amused, with a quaint disconsolate tone in his voice.

'At any rate it is not a subject for grief,' said Mme. de Valmont.

'It is very kind of you to say so, madame.'

'Mamma always speaks the truth,' said Cécile.

'Yes, always,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'I find it much too tiresome to pay compliments that I don't mean.'

Just then there was a voice at the door.

'Mme. la Marquise est servie;' and young Léon de Rochemar, in his elder brother's absence, came forward, and gave his arm to Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, according to the good French fashion which puts age before rank.

Johnny found himself falling in with Mdle. de Valmont, and they sat together at one end of the table. The young Frenchmen were rather silent in the presence of their elders, but Johnny did not think it necessary to follow their example, and tried to amuse his neighbour as well as he could. Frank looked at him now and then from his place between Mme. de l'Allier and Marie, and wondered how the dreamy, absent, unintellectual sailor could bring such bright looks of interest and amusement into the very handsome but still countenance of the girl beside him. Johnny's quiet way of devoting himself to one person—never thinking of the rest of

the world, but abounding in attentions to that one, with a certain frankness and downrightness which came across the conventionalities of tired landsfolk like a fresh breeze from the sea—was much more attractive than a person of Frank's character could understand. Probably Johnny was talking nonsense in bad French; but whatever it was, Mdle. Cécile evidently liked it, and responded with so much spirit that M. de l'Allier remarked in an undertone to her mother,

'But mademoiselle votre fille is beautiful, she is brilliant. And how she resembles you!'

Mme. de Valmont looked down the table, and thought, perhaps, M. de l'Allier had meant that remark on Cécile's brilliancy as a note of warning. But she did not feel that it was necessary; she had an instinctive confidence in the young sailor, and a well-grounded one in her daughter, as having that dutiful tractable temper, that clear innocence, and that gentleness, only to be found in a really noble character. So she turned again, smiling, to M. de l'Allier, and began to tell him the origin of their acquaintance with Johnny.

'Indeed! a brave young fellow,' said her neighbour, considerably stroking his gray moustache. 'He has a right to a smile from mademoiselle. But his brother has the advantage in looks.'

'Do you think so?' said Mme. de Valmont. 'Certainly he is handsome, but I prefer the character of the other.'

Then, for a moment, as she looked in Frank's direction, something seemed to strike her. He was speaking to Marie, and in the girl's face as she listened there was a curious excitement, a nervousness that flushed her cheeks and wrinkled her forehead into

distressed lines, while she kept her eyes down and would not look at her cousin as she answered him. One moment, Mme. de Valmont felt extreme surprise; the next, she almost thought she had been mistaken, for Marie had entirely recovered her usual expression, and was laughing at some witty remark of Mme. de l'Allier's.

This lady's four children came in at dessert—the little girls with long curls and embroidered frocks; the boys with long white coats, white boots, large blue bows at their necks, and hair brushed up in a crest. Not long after everybody went back, arm in arm, to the salon, where the little boys walked about under Mme. de Rochemar's direction with the coffee-cups, and people's chief business was talking to the children and admiring them. Presently, when the gentlemen were gone away to the smoking-room and the children had disappeared, Mme. de Rochemar sat down among her friends and began telling ghost-stories.

Agnes Wyatt, as she listened and looked on, thought the little lady was a comedy in herself; her wonderful gesticulations, noddings, wavings, flourishes of her large fan, pats with her foot upon the floor, and her face of half-terrified enjoyment, gave double effect to the stories she told. At Rochemar they had a crusader, who was heard rattling his armour inside the walls whenever any danger drew near any member of the family. He had even appeared once in bodily form to the Marquis Charles de Rochemar, in the time of Louis Quinze, and had warned him that in a year he would either have died or have gained great honour.

'Well, as to that, he did both, for he was killed in the storming of Kehl.'

As Agnes listened to the talk of these ladies, she became aware that there was not a château, or village, or even an old bridge in the neighbourhood without its ghost, or legend, or tradition. Some of them had to do with saints, some with old battles, and very many with the Revolution, which seemed to have passed over the country like a black thunder-cloud, leaving ruin behind it; and yet this part of France had suffered little in comparison.

'Cécile,' said Marie, in a low voice, going up to Mdlle. de Valmont, 'shall we go out on the terrace?' And the two girls went out accordingly through a window into the warm still night outside, lighted up by thousands of stars, the Milky Way flowing like a stream of silver across the sky.

The great terrace at Rochemar looked down from its height on flower-gardens sloping to the river; another sky of stars lay twinkling and trembling on the polished blackness. The night air was full of the scent of some flowers that were hidden in the dark under the terrace-wall. Many a lady in bygone days had walked out upon that terrace, leaving behind her the heavy towers, which in their great white strength looked as if they might be—what no doubt they often were—a living tomb. Few more graceful examples of young French womanhood had ever walked there than these two in their white dresses, as they came out of the bright salon, and moved across to the balustrade, looking down on the river and the dim starlit country beyond.

'Dear little Marie,' said Cécile, in the fulness of her kind heart, 'I do congratulate you. How happy you will be, with this beautiful château, and everything you can wish for in the world!'

'Do not you think it was very

wise of me to say yes' said Marie.

'Yes, certainly. You could not have refused. Shall you be much in Paris? Ah, what a pleasure it will be to meet there! And do you know when M. de Rochemar returns?'

'Mon Dieu, non?' said Marie impatiently; 'how should I know? I am not yet his wife, my dear!'

'You must be very anxious to see him.'

'Yes, and no. I know it all must come one of these days, and I assure you I am in no hurry. You see I have waited so long that I have grown quite used to living at Les Sapinières, and amusing myself there in my own way. It is strange enough that M. de Rochemar has had this in his head for years—ever since I was almost a child, and he was going abroad for the first time.'

'Ah, that is quite beautiful. And you did not see him when he came back four years ago?'

'No, I was very ill then. We were at Nice, and every one thought I should either die, or only live to join some order. The changes of this world are amusing enough. Here I am going to be married. Did you see him then? Tell me, is he very ugly?'

'No,' said Cécile, with a shade of hesitation.

'Voyons donc! As ugly as my cousin Johnny?'

'There is not a shade of likeness. M. de Rochemar is very dark, with black eyes, very like a soldier. But you do not call your cousin ugly? He has such beautiful eyes.'

Marie laughed, and then, laying her hand with a sudden movement on Cécile's, she whispered,

'Yes, I do call him ugly. This is what I call handsome.'

Her manner, even more than her words, startled Cécile's calm

simplicity in a disagreeable way. The next moment Frank Wyatt came up to them, tall, graceful, and looking quite like a paladin in the starlight.

'You must be cold, *ma cousine*,' he said to Marie. 'Ought you to be out here? Yes, it is very beautiful; but so is the salon in another way, and *Mme. de Rochemar* is asking for some music. Do you sing, *mademoiselle*?' turning to Cécile.

'No, I do not,' she answered gravely; and then, hardly understanding her own feelings, she walked away at once towards the window.

Frank took Marie's hand, and drew it into his arm as they followed her.

Mme. de Rochemar, whose eldest son's absence often made her feel as melancholy as any one of her cheerful nature possibly could be, thought and said that for years she had not enjoyed such a delightful evening as this. She had always wished to know something of the English; and this young man was perfect, set off by the very much quieter manners and appearance of his sister and brother. His figure, face, and voice were without fault, and she was unprejudiced enough to wish that her sons would take example by his correct and graceful manners. Still, of course, he was a minor attraction to her dear Marie, who was looking so well, so pretty, with that refined face and charming little figure, and who had learnt by inspiration to mingle with her natural gentleness the ease and *savoir faire* of a young lady who had seen the world. As the evening went on, she beckoned M. de l'Allier to her in a corner, and asked him what he thought of her future daughter-in-law.

'A most charming little person, indeed,' said M. de l'Allier. 'Mon-

sieur Louis is very fortunate. Mademoiselle is exactly the style that I admire. She is like some graceful flower, fragile perhaps, but delicately beautiful. Certainly there is no one in this country to approach her. I assure you, as she entered the room this evening, I said to myself, "Here is the Flower of Anjou!"

'Cher monsieur, you are too amiable,' said Mme. de Rochemar, looking perfectly delighted, and clapping her hands gently. To have extorted such a compliment as this from any one so stiff and unimpressible was indeed a triumph. "The Flower of Anjou!" the Marquise repeated. 'Beautiful—charming! Pardon! I must really tell that to Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. Not in Mme. de Valmont's hearing; but she is occupied with the English demoiselle. The "Flower of Anjou!" Allons, you are a poet. I shall tell Louis in my next letter; and I assure you that our angel shall not lose the name.'

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE IN ARCADIA.

'You seem very fond of the society of the ladies,' said Johnny Wyatt, coming into the salon one day before breakfast, and finding his brother on a sofa in a shady corner. 'I have been talking to the Maire, and we are going out shooting together presently. You had better come too.'

'I think not,' said Frank.

'Why not? The old boy is great fun. When I asked him if he liked shooting, he gave himself a tremendous smite, and shouted out, "Avec moi la chasse est une passion!" Auguste has got a gun that he's going to lend me. The Maire takes him out sometimes.'

'Perhaps so. But the Maire is not going to take me,' said Frank, which silenced Johnny for the moment.

The Maire of Sonnay was a very respectable and well-thinking person, a retired tradesman of Carillon, who had built himself a smart little house on the other side of the valley, where he had gardens and plenty of glass, and cultivated very fine flowers and fruit. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, who liked to be on the best of terms with her neighbours, had given this worthy man permission to shoot over her estate, reserving to herself the power of killing any game she wanted whenever she pleased. Johnny had made friends with the Maire, as he had by this time with all the people about the place, thus providing himself with plenty of amusement. He had a hand in everything that went on. They were just beginning to beat down the walnuts, and he was to be found with a long stick near the top of the tree. The river was an unfailing interest—what with bathing, fishing, or clearing out the weeds preparatory to catching a desperate pike that lurked there. Half a dozen men were busy there, some pulling away the long reeds and water-plants that would straggle across the stream, some beating the water with poles, one walking along in the middle of the river with a net pushed before him. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire stood looking on at the failure of all these people to entrap Monsieur le Brochet. Nobody would venture into a certain dark hole close to the bridge, till Johnny took a net that was lying on the bank, dropped quietly in, and, after remaining some minutes up to his neck in water, brought out the pike in triumph. This odd boy had also a taste for cooking; he made great friends with

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire's cook, studied coffee-making and other mysteries, and gave her some wrinkles that he had picked up in his different voyages. All these things were done without any talking, and with an air of quiet indifference. When Johnny wished to make friends with anybody, he let his eyes speak for him, in a manner quite remarkable for a person so really unaffected.

'You can't be well, old fellow,' he said, with a sailor's kindness, as he stood by the table, with a sun-ray falling straight in on his hair, and looked at his pale brother lounging in the corner.

'Yes, I am,' said Frank civilly enough. 'But I don't care to go out in this broiling sun, unless it is to sit still somewhere. There's nothing to pity me for. I find it pleasanter here, and I must say I never was in a country better arranged for pleasing oneself.'

'That's true,' said Johnny. 'Well, I'm glad you are contented. You seem to be quite first fiddle with little Miss Marie. Do you like her?'

'Of course. She is the prettiest and most ladylike little thing you or I ever saw. Thoroughbred to the tips of her fingers. Look at her nails. One don't meet girls like that often in England.'

Johnny looked on the floor and whistled. It never entered into his head to argue with his brother; that would have been both troublesome and useless, however he might disagree with him. But it happened that Marie was both pretty and ladylike. That did not interfere with the fact that somebody else was beautiful and noble.

'I am very sorry for her,' Frank went on. 'How these people manage to stunt and narrow their

girls' minds is a wonder to me. But I think Marie is already beginning to see her way out, though one has to show it very carefully to these devout people. It is not much use, though, when there is that dreadful marriage before her. But after all, a little development can only do her good.'

'How do you set about it?' said Johnny dreamily. 'I say, Frank, what a pity we did not get here a few days sooner! You might have had a chance against that Marquis, so far off as he is.'

'O, I don't know,' said Frank. 'Transplanting seldom answers well. Besides, the grandmother would never have listened to it. Think of my quarters and Rochemar—my income and the Marquis's.'

'Do these people think so much about money and all that? One being richer than another seems to make no difference in the society here.'

'Are any of them poor?' retorted Frank. 'Certainly they are all on a level, and birth is everything, and there is none of the snobbish purse-pride we have in England. But at the same time do you suppose that their dignity would allow any of these girls to marry beneath them? It is the same with the men. There must be tolerably equal advantages on both sides.'

'Ah, I suppose so,' said Johnny. 'And they are all so well brought up that the notion of anything else never occurs to them.'

'Of course not. They might just as well, or better, think of marrying the Great Mogul as a stray Englishman without a big house and an estate at his back. They quite see the gulf between them and us. As for crossing it—why, they have never learnt to swim. So you see, Johnny, they feel as safe with you and me as

with their grandfathers. And we may make ourselves as happy as we can with them.'

'Things do happen, though,' said Johnny. 'I've read in books—'

'Only among the Bohemian sort,' said Frank consolingly. 'Not in Catholic, Legitimist, noble, well-regulated families. Their young ladies are shut up in brass towers, like the princess in the fairy-tale.'

'But those princesses always got out somehow.'

'Don't flatter yourself. You saved her life, and she is certainly handsome, but perfectly immovable. A young Gorgon. I thought of Medusa when I looked at her. You might as well try to run away with Le Mans cathedral.'

'Run away! Who talks of running away!' exclaimed Johnny indignantly, his face becoming redder. 'I'll be hanged if I understand you. I don't know what you mean by talking about Gorgons.'

'Nothing at all,' answered Frank very peaceably. 'And we shall all be much wiser if we stay where we are—for the present at least.'

The breakfast-bell began to ring, and Mme. de Saint-Hilaire's tall figure came walking past the windows, with her poodle following behind. Johnny left his brother, and went out to wish her good-morning.

Of course he said no more to Frank about the shooting; but went off, after breakfast, to join M. Lafon, leaving the others to amuse themselves as they liked. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire asked them if they would drive with her to Carillon, where she wanted to do some shopping, and in the mean while went to give some orders to her people.

Agnes took a parasol from the hall, and went after her across the yard, where she was standing, a picturesque figure, in the low dark archway of the farm-kitchen. Here the people were at dinner, the men in their blue blouses at a long table, and three or four women scattered about in the corners and at the windows, eating soup with an abundance of cabbage, and drinking the red wine of the country. Agnes thought Frank might have made a study of that kitchen, with the sun pouring in through the opposite windows, streaming across the stone floor, lighting up the grave Angevin faces, the snowy caps, the brown pitchers on the table, and the great bowls from which they helped themselves. She often came and peeped in at them; for this was her aunt's favourite time for giving orders, when she could find them and speak to them all together. Agnes was fast losing herself in a sort of dreamy peace in this Arcadia, where none of the disturbing elements of life seemed to enter. Everything was harmonious, gentle, graceful, and picturesque. Peasants and animals worked hard, but were placid and contented all the time. Nobody rebelled but the big black ox, Erèbe, who did not like his first experience of ploughing, but was growing more manageable every day. The sun shone, and the fruits ripened, the vintage was approaching, the walnuts were being gathered, all through these soft September days. And to remind the people that there is another world beyond this, the *Angelus* bell rang out at sunrise, noon, and sunset; the hills and the château echoed it back. Agnes began to listen for it, and to feel that she would miss it when she went away.

(To be continued.).

ST. VALENTINE'S LOTTERY.

In Two Drawings.

I.

THE FIRST DRAWING.

EARLY days for sketching out of doors. Mid February does not generally in our climate offer much temptation to the landscape-painter to take the field. But Frank Hilary was young, strong, and enthusiastic, full of determination, and ready to brave all the vicissitudes of the artist's career, bad weather included.

But the weather was not bad on the occasion when we first make his acquaintance, as he sits quietly working at a water-colour drawing of some grand pollard oaks—quite the contrary, for the sky and the temperature on this present 14th of February, A.D. 1870, was suggestive rather of midsummer. It was one of those sudden bursts of spring-promise with which we are sometimes favoured, only, as it would seem, to emphasise the rigours of the March and April that are to follow.

The woods were alive with song, the feathered choristers availing themselves to the utmost, everywhere, of the encouragement the sun was giving to their love-making. True, the trees were bare, freezingly bare, with an uncanny skeleton-like look about them, whilst the dense masses of ever-green shrubbery which somehow had got itself mixed up with the brambles and soddened bracken on the skirts of the oak copse which Hilary was sketching, brought into strong relief, here and there, the silvery boles and rugged gnarled trunks of the forest monarchs. The

timid crocus and primrose peeped out now and again from amongst the weltering heaps of last autumn's russet leaves, and even massed themselves as unmistakable patches of colour along the ridge of broken gravelly bank which, amphitheatre-like, made an uncommonly snug nook for the painter.

It was a singularly sheltered and sequestered spot, and sitting there so quietly as he did, the very squirrels came down from their trees, and the rabbits from their burrows, to within arm's length of him before they saw him. It was altogether a paradise of a place for a painter, whilst the fine foreground of gnarled timber, the wide stretch of park, the peep of blue distance, and the gabled roofs, twisted chimneys, and ivy-clad turrets of Croyston Towers made up a subject which must have struck even the most indifferent.

Frank Hilary had found his way hither from Hadenham, a house three miles off, where he was staying whilst painting the portrait of a favourite child, one of several daughters of a Mr. Hughes, the owner of the place. He had nearly completed it, and would probably have returned to London without so much as catching a glimpse of Croyston Towers, had not the sudden illness of the little girl prevented her from sitting to him for two or three days. But as the picturesque fame of the neighbouring old mansion was proverbial, Hilary availed himself of the fine weather and his unlooked-for leisure to walk over and possibly make a sketch of the celebrated Tudor mansion.

He had approached to within a quarter of a mile of it by a path across the park, when he suddenly came upon the oak-trees and the composition they made with the distant view of the house. Halting within the little amphitheatre of broken bank where we find him sitting, he exclaimed, 'Whew! how hot it is! it's like June! I can walk no farther; this subject is good enough for me;' and he went to work accordingly.

It was about ten o'clock A.M. when he first opened his camp-stool, and for two hours he remained completely absorbed and undisturbed. Looking up at last, towards the left, where the ever-greens trended away in a sort of wilderness until they reached the shrubbery and gardens of the mansion, what was his surprise to see a young lady sitting within some thirty yards of him, also sketching. Her profile was towards him, and it was very evident to him, after a few minutes' contemplation, that she, like the squirrels and rabbits, had come to these close quarters quite unconscious of his presence. Moreover, from the general lay of the land, the bank, and the shrubs, his ambush was pretty nearly complete. He had a perfect view of her, but unless she were to advance a few paces, and then look straight back into his little amphitheatre, she probably could not see him at all. She made a striking figure, one not likely to be overlooked by an artist.

'How charmingly she comes there!' said Frank to himself. 'By Jove, I must make a line or two of her. What luck! why, if one had wanted a figure to fit, here it is—colour perfect, form exquisite!'

With rapid strokes the skilled hand soon produced an unmistakable presentment, slight at first, but growing by degrees into a vivid

reproduction. The soft woollen dress of a lovely olive-gray green, with collar and cuffs of dark fur, contrasted well with the rich golden twists of hair kept natively in their place by a knot of deep-crimson ribbon shining out quite brilliantly under the shady black hat covered with nestling feathers, whilst the slightest peep of a crimson petticoat carried the warm tone artistically through the composition. As one by one such details were completed, the artist's enthusiasm and admiration increased. When she moved slightly, he paused in an agony lest the pose should be irremediably altered. When she turned her head, he winced lest she might see him, and so take flight abashed; but within an hour and a half he had managed to complete a most attractive sketch in water-colour, perfectly unmistakable in its likeness. The delicate piquant profile even had been caught, and was as like as all the rest, notwithstanding the distance betwixt artist and sitter; for Frank's clear blue eye was far-reaching and penetrating.

One o'clock rung out from the turret of Croyston Towers. The young lady rose hastily, gathered her traps together, and hurried away through the wilderness towards the house.

'What a nuisance!' cried Frank aloud; 'I only wanted about another half-hour, and I could have finished it thoroughly—well, never mind. I'll come over again to-morrow, and very likely she will come too; she is an enthusiast evidently, dear little creature, from the way she stuck to her work; amateurs generally are. I wonder who she is?'

Then Frank went on with his oak-trees through the remainder of the lovely afternoon, and came again the next day, as he said, to finish them; it could not have been for any other purpose, of course;

but somehow he could not finish them; circumstances were just as propitious for work, and the weather was equally fine, but nevertheless he could not settle to it. Instead of looking at his subject, he was for ever turning his head to the left, towards that shrubbery of a wilderness, as if he expected something besides bushes to appear there. Nothing else, however, was visible throughout the whole day; and it became quite evident to the least interested in such matters that the oak-trees would still require one more day's work. His host saw this plainly; and as the little sitter was not yet quite well, there was no difficulty on that head; so, for the third time, Hilary went to his oak-trees, and then he finished them; but he had no chance of finishing that other drawing—'she' never appeared again.

'What is the name of the family at Croyston Towers?' asked Frank casually of Mr. Hughes at dinner that evening.

'Belport is the family name,' was the answer; 'but there is only old Lady Belport living there now, the dowager. Croyston is made to do duty for the Dower House.'

'There is not much life, then, going on there now, I suppose?' said Frank.

'O dear, no; only people who go over to look at the place; or, like yourself, to make a sketch of it; it's a favourite subject with artists, as you know.'

'Yes, in the summer; there are plenty of them then, no doubt, but not at this time of the year, of course,' went on Frank.

'By no means; I have seen people sketching there in the depth of winter,' replied the host.

'H'm,' thought Hilary, 'she couldn't have been staying in the house then. I wonder who she was, and where she came from'

Surely if he had wanted to know

so very much, he might have shown the sketch of the young lady in the wilderness to Mr. Hughes, who, being a local magnate, might have been able to tell him who she was. But he did nothing of the kind, and he returned to London without making an effort, as it seemed, to find out; but then everybody knows that artists are very odd inconsequent fellows about some things.

II.

THE SECOND DRAWING.

'CONGRATULATE you on your picture, Hilary!—it's the best bit of landscape I've seen of yours; and that figure of the girl sketching is charming.'

'Glad you like it. It's not much in my line, landscape—and Croyston Towers is such a hackneyed subject that I hardly know how I came to paint it; but I saw it this winter, during some wonderfully fine weather, and I thought it looked new rather, and I have made a good deal of the figure, as you see.'

'Yes; and very, very charming it is—delightful feeling about it; very nice, indeed, old fellow!—rather a pity you didn't paint it larger.'

'Hadm't time.'

'However, they have given it a first-rate place; you are sure to sell it.'

Now the first-rate place in question was a conspicuous spot on the line in the water-colour room of the Royal Academy Exhibition; and the occasion when Frank Hilary received the above and many more congratulatory criticisms from his friends was the varnishing day, just prior to the opening. The rooms were crowded with the brethren of the brush, chatting and commenting, dusting and touching

up their works, as they are privileged to do at such times, undisturbed by the outer world.

Just as the last words of Frank's friend fell from his lips, the two painters were joined by several others.

'Who is the lady, Hilary?' cries one; 'she's deuced nice! Evidently a likeness, old man?'

'Yes, it is a likeness, I am bound to say; and she comes pretty well there, I think.'

'Ah, you knew her, you rascal, and got her to sit.'

'Not at all; but you fellows want to know too much. It doesn't matter to you who she is if you like the result; that's sufficient, isn't it?' said Hilary, biting his lip.

'Well,' chimed in yet another brother of the brush who here came up, 'if he won't let on about his model, we know where to go for the model of an artist!'

'What do you mean?' said Hilary.

'O, I like that! You don't mean to say you don't know what I mean?'

'I'll swear I don't!'

'What! haven't you seen your likeness? Will you tell me you haven't been sitting to somebody?'

'No, on my word!'

'Well, then, it's the most extraordinary likeness I ever saw; come and look: it's rather a clever drawing too. Here, it's over here, at the end of the room.'

And Hilary was carried off by two or three of his friends, and brought up in front of a water-colour drawing. It represented an artist at work out of doors in winter, ensconced in a sheltered little nook, with a background of broken bank, pollard oak-trees, and in the distance a peep of—why, Croyston Towers, surely! Frank Hilary was rather taken aback, for of a certainty he was the artist. Yes,

there he was; just as he must have appeared on that memorable 14th of February and for the two succeeding days. There could be no mistake; he plainly saw the likeness in the face, to say nothing of the fidelity with which his favourite rough shooting-coat, wide-awake, &c. had been reproduced. Besides, there was the place quite recognisable. What did it mean? Stooping down to examine the drawing, for it was hung low, he was so absorbed in wonder, that he did not hear the little bursts of raillery and laughter in which his friends continued to indulge. He kept peering and peering, as if to find out who was the painter; but there were no initials, no name in the corner, nothing to give him a clue.

'I should like to take it down and have a look at the back, to see who it is done by,' said he abstractedly.

'Just as if you didn't know, Frank. You must wait till Monday for the catalogue, eh, before you can possibly find out! What rot it is your pretending to be so innocent! Why, he's actually blushing, look!'

And the remark of his friend, whilst it raised more merriment amongst the others, was strictly true; he *was* blushing, for a sudden idea had crossed his mind.

Was this portrait of himself in any way the solution of the problem of *her* non-reappearance? He remembered that the 14th of February was St. Valentine's day, and this strengthened his idea, though why it should one could hardly guess, for artists do not generally attend much to dates, nor are they very accurate about them.

During the next two or three hours which Frank Hilary spent in the rooms of Burlington House, he paid many furtive visits to the

water-colour room, in the hope of catching some one dusting the glass over his portrait, and so perhaps find out what sort of an individual the artist might be. But nobody gave the least care to the drawing, and Frank was fain to go home in ignorance of who had turned him to such picturesque account. This was on the Tuesday, Thursday was the press day, on Friday came the private view; but Hilary was not high up enough on the ladder of notoriety to be invited, and so he never got a peep into a catalogue. However, he should find out all about it on Monday he thought, and was pacifying his impatience with this reflection and a final pipe on the Friday evening in question, when the last post brought him a letter. It was an important-looking letter too, only the second of its kind he had ever received; but he knew it, and tore it open impatiently. With the official heading of the Royal Academy of Arts, the printed form with names, dates, &c. filled in, it ran thus:

'Sir,—I have to intimate to you that your work, No. 631 in the Catalogue of the Royal Academy for the present year, entitled "A Lady Sketching, Croyston Towers, St. Valentine's day," and priced 40*l.*, has been selected for purchase by Mr. Raphael Madder of 888 Piccadilly. As the Royal Academy only undertakes to register the selection of works, it is left to the artist to communicate with the purchaser in reference to the payment and delivery of the work at the close of the exhibition.

'I am, sir, yours, ———.

'To Frank Hilary, Esq.'

'Capital!' thought Frank, 'this is luck indeed! But who is Mr. Raphael Madder? Why, if I'm not mistaken, he's an artists' colour-man; keeps one of those fashion-

able West-end shops, all polish and pasteboard, to tempt the amateur; and if so he is only a dummy put forward by the real purchaser, who does not want to be known. He could not have been himself at the private view. I shall see about it the first thing to-morrow morning.'

And early on the Saturday Frank walked off to No. 888 Piccadilly, to find his conjecture correct.

'Yes, sir,' said the hopman, 'we have been advised by our customer of the purchase, and have been directed to hand you a cheque for the amount on Monday, on the receipt of your order to receive the picture at the close of the exhibition.'

'But your customer,' said Frank, 'who is your customer?'

'We are not at liberty to say, sir; it was made a particular request that we should *not* say. We often act as agents for our customers in these matters. It saves wealthy people a deal of trouble.'

'H'm,' said Frank, 'I should like to have known where my picture was going nevertheless. You are really stating facts, are you? I mean you are not going in for picture-dealing yourselves.'

'O, dear no, sir. As I say, we do a great deal of agency business of this kind; you will find our name and address given in the catalogue frequently; that is for amateur ladies and gentlemen who don't want their own residences given. See,' went on the man, producing a new but much rumpled catalogue of the Exhibition, 'here we are; here's a case this year, "Brown, Corisande, No. 842, care of Mr. Raphael Madder, &c." His finger was travelling down the alphabetical list of contributors at the end of the book. Frank pounced on it eagerly (now he should find out at least the name of the artist who had painted *him*); and saying,

'Allow me,' sought out the water-colour room. Quickly his eye took in a page or two of numbers, titles, and artists' names. Presently he blushed visibly; there it was undoubtedly; that was it—'No. 842—An Artist sketching Croyston Towers, St. Valentine's day;' and who had painted it, after all? Why, 'Corisande Brown'! Then Frank turned to the alphabetical list again to make sure.

'What did you say was the name?' he was going on. 'Yes, certainly, "Corisande Brown," I see, care of Mr. Raphael Madder. O then,' addressing the man behind the counter, 'this picture is by another of your customers?'

The man's eye was following Frank's pointing finger. 'Yes, that is so, sir,' was the answer.

'Do you know if it is for sale?'

'Cannot say, sir, but I should fancy not; amateurs do not generally care to sell.'

'And who is Corisande Brown, may I ask?'

'I am not at liberty to say, sir; it is quite anonymous; in point of fact, I don't know; Mr. Madder manages these things.'

'H'm, very mysterious, indeed,' said Frank half angrily; 'you won't tell me who bought my picture, and you won't tell me who painted a picture I admire; and, supposing I want to buy it, you won't tell me whether it is for sale. Strange way of doing business.'

'These are my orders, sir; but I'll find out. I'll ask Mr. Madder if he thinks the drawing you refer to is to be had.'

'Well, I wish you would. I saw it on the varnishing day, and I should like to have it if it is not too much. Well, then, if I call on Monday,' continued Frank, after a pause, 'and give you an order to receive my picture, you say you will give me a cheque for the amount?'

'Yes, sir, and let you know about the drawing at the same time. Good-morning, sir.'

Very much puzzled indeed was Frank with all this. Strange that the portrait of himself should have been christened much as he had christened his portrait of *her*. 'A Lady sketching Croyston Towers, St. Valentine's day.' 'An Artist sketching Croyston Towers, St. Valentine's day.' Odd, too, that Mr. Madder should be acting as agent for the exhibition of the one and for the purchase of the other. Well, it is a coincidence, of course, but, all things remembered, it's a strange one! And Frank went his way musing.

After a hasty run through the rooms on Monday, the opening day, he marched straight off again to Mr. Madder's, and found the cheque, signed by that purveyor of artists' materials, awaiting him. Duly acknowledging it, and giving his order for the delivery of the picture to Mr. Madder, he said,

'Well, what about that drawing? is it for sale?'

'No, sir.'

'Positively?'

'Positively.'

'Now it is not by any chance the work of the same person who bought my picture, is it?'

'Really I don't know, sir; I cannot say.'

'They are both customers of yours?'

'Yes, sir.'

'But they are not both the same person?'

'Upon my word, sir,' said the man, smiling, 'I am not at liberty to say anything.'

No, and strive as he would, Frank could get no more out of Mr. Raphael Madder's man; but he drew his own conclusions, and he had to wait six weeks before he obtained any relief for the unusually perplexed state of his intellect.

The evening set apart by the President and Council of the Royal Academy for their grand *soirée* and reception came round, as it usually does, towards the end of June. Mr. Frank Hilary, like the rest of the exhibitors, was bidden to the entertainment, there to mingle with the motley throng, ranging from the highest in the land to the most obscure followers of art—yes, like the rest of the exhibitors, for they are all invited. 'She' might be there, then; at any rate, 'Corisande Brown' would be invited, and supposing she and the purchaser of his picture were one and the same person, why, he might see her perhaps! So he went to Burlington House in a state of undue trepidation. Constantly he found himself prowling in the neighbourhood, first of his own portrait and then of his own picture. Suddenly, on coming within range of the latter, he started, and had any of his jocose friends been with him (which he thanked his stars was not the case) he certainly would again have become a butt for their good-humoured chaff, for he was blushing up to the roots of his hair.

A little knot of people were standing in front of No. 631, 'A Lady sketching,' &c., evidently examining it with keen interest. One person only, however, in this group had any attraction for Frank. He saw nobody but her; for there she was, unmistakably, looking at her own portrait! Her profile was towards him, as it had been when he made the sketch, as it was now in its reproduction in the finished drawing. The likeness, under this severe test, was even more striking than ever, in spite of the vast difference in costume. In a bewilderment of admiration—not, be it understood, of his own skill, but of her beauty—Hilary hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels. A hand on his shoulder

aroused him, and turning, he was face to face with Mr. Hughes, his host at Hadenham.

'Glad to meet you, Mr. Hilary. I have been looking at your picture of Croyston Towers: it is capital! I recognised it from its fidelity to the sketch you showed me, which you made whilst staying with us; but the figure, the young lady, that was not in your original drawing, I think?—that, I suppose, was a separate study which you did not show me?' and there was an airy significance in Mr. Hughes's last words.

Recovering from his momentary confusion, and stammering out something about its being an afterthought, Frank saw that Mr. Hughes made one of the party that had been looking at his picture.

'It is a capital likeness,' continued that gentleman. 'I know the lady intimately, and she is amazed and puzzled to imagine how you obtained her portrait; for she declares she never sat to you, and is highly indignant. She wishes me to present you to her, however, that she may ask you and call you to account. Allow me: Mr. Hilary, Miss Dacres;' and Frank immediately found himself bowing to his nymph of the woods.

'I am rather pleased with your picture, Mr. Hilary,' she said condescendingly, in a voice that, notwithstanding the hauteur of its tone, set his whole frame tingling; 'it is very like—the place, I mean; we live close to Croyston, and I know it well.'

'I am glad you approve,' said Frank, now no longer blushing, his courage having risen to the occasion.

'But, pray,' she went on, 'how did you get a like—'

'Ah,' he broke in, 'I know what you are going to say. I must ask your forgiveness. A thousand pardons for having taken such

a liberty; but it was irresistible—I mean, you were irresistible; as an artist yourself you can understand how well you came against those dark evergreens.'

'Yes, you have made my dress tell very well, I grant,' she said, glancing towards the picture with an air of patronage; 'but I want to know, and I insist on being told, how you were able to make a likeness of me?—and how do you know I am an artist? Is there anything in my personal appearance that suggests the æsthetic?'

'Yes; particularly when I see you on a camp-stool, with a colour-box on your thumb!'

'Pray, where did you ever see me so?'

'Why, there—where I have painted you!' and Hilary pointed to the picture.

'Indeed! I was not aware that I was being watched. I did not know that espionage was one of the many accomplishments of a painter!'

'I apologise. I dared not let you see me, or I should have lost my one great opportunity; but you had your revenge, I fancy,' he added, looking straight into her dark-gray eyes, which she immediately dropped.

'I don't understand,' she said. 'I certainly did not see you when I was sketching "Old Croyston"'—an emphasis on 'Old Croyston'—'on that very fine St. Valentine's day.'

'Ah!' cried Frank; 'no, you did not see me then; but how about the next day, and the next? They were equally fine; did not you go again to the oak copse?'

'Really I don't remember,' she answered, a little confused.

'No? There is a picture over there—if you won't mind coming to the other end of the room—that might possibly help your memory; it is rather a curious coincidence.'

Frank offered his arm, and they moved away, followed by Mr. Hughes and his two elder daughters, who were with him.

Hilary stopped of course immediately in front of his own portrait.

'That's it,' he said. 'Odd coincidence, is it not?—"An Artist sketching" instead of "A Lady sketching"?''

She made a pretence of looking at the picture, and then of searching for it in the catalogue. Then she said naively,

"Corisande Brown,"—who is she?'

'Ah, who indeed! Whoever she is, she is clever enough; and you see who she has been painting, don't you?'

'It is not unlike you, Mr. Hilary,' she said, with an air of supreme innocence.

'No, not very unlike indeed. I was so vain that I wanted to buy it, because it was like—'

'And you could not?'

'No; Corisande Brown won't sell it.'

'You must take that as a compliment; she does not want to part with you!'

'Ah, if I could only think that! But I don't deserve such happiness, because, you see, I have sold *her* portrait'—he chanced this bold shot—'and I have been miserable ever since; and what's more, I can't find out who has bought it.'

'Perhaps Corisande Brown has bought it,' said Miss Dacres archly—the shot seemed to have told—'perhaps she wants it as a companion to her artist; the drawings are much the same size, and would make a happy pair—a pair of Valentines in fact!'

Mr. Hughes here interrupted and changed the conversation by a reference to some other picture, to Frank's infinite disgust; and what with the jostling of the crowd and the talk of the rest of the party,

he never again that night got a word with Miss Dacres. He hovered round her, but she had evidently no intention that he should pursue the subject; and after a while Frank lost sight of her and her friends entirely, as they mingled with the company. He was in an agony of despair, and rushed wildly about the rooms; but people were beginning to go now—the Royal Academy *soirée* of 1870 was over, and the painter had to retire with the rest in a state of dejection that was quite abject. Was there ever such a fascinating charming woman? He began to build the most stupendous castles in the air. He must see her again; but how? He had failed even to get Mr. Hughes's town address, and he was under an engagement to leave London himself in a few days. Poor Frank! he was hard hit—he could not get over it. There was a significance too, he thought, about all the circumstances quite remarkable; and they were, it must be admitted, sufficient to make a deep impression on the heart of a susceptible and sensitive young artist; and we all know how sensitive and susceptible artists are, both young and old.

III.

THE PRIZE.

ONCE more the winter came round. The occupations of the interval had not diverted Frank's thoughts; he dreamt of his nymph of the woods day and night; but his despair was growing chronic, when the hope of seeing her again was revived early in the new year by the receipt of a letter from Mr. Hughes requesting that he would make arrangements to go down to Hadenham to paint the portrait of another of his children. He went

gladly of course, and once more by mid February had nearly completed his work. He had not dared to refer to Miss Dacres: his old timidity having again laid hold of him, he could not think of her without blushing. Mr. Hughes was the first to mention her.

'We are going to drive over to Lockhurst, Mr. Hilary,' he said one day at luncheon; 'there are a few good pictures there; you might be interested. By the way, you met Miss Dacres, I think. Of course, I remember; I introduced you at the Academy *soirée*. I don't know if she is at home, though, now.'

'Miss Dacres lives at Lockhurst then?' inquired Frank.

'Yes, sometimes. She is very well off, and quite independent. She goes about a good deal, but spends the most of her time with an old aunt at Lockhurst; I hope she is there now.'

And we may be sure Frank echoed that hope heartily.

It was realised. Miss Dacres was there, and renewed her acquaintance with Mr. Hilary cordially, if a little shyly; but his courage never forsook him, he found, when once in her presence. Her aunt was not well, and she had to do the honours. The pictures, however, were not of much importance, being principally the work of amateurs; sketches which Miss Dacres had got together from her friends, with here and there a purchase from a water-colour exhibition. They had been nearly all duly inspected, Frank making appropriate reference of course to Miss Dacres' own taste and skill in the art; and the party were passing along a corridor back to the drawing-room for afternoon tea, when the sight of an easel, through a half-open door, caught Hilary's attention.

'Your painting-room, Miss Da-

eres, I presume,' he cried, stopping, whilst Mr. Hughes and his two daughters, who were in advance, continued their way to the drawing-room. 'May I not be privileged to see what you are doing?'

'O, I have very little to show; but if you care to look, walk in.'

He did so, a step in advance of her. In an instant she shot by him like a rush of wind, and with a sweep of her arm rapidly drew a curtain across a little recess or alcove; but Frank's eyes were quicker than her action: she was too late, for he had seen—what? Why, his picture, 'A Lady sketching,' &c., hanging on the wall, and side by side with it, as companion, his own portrait—'An Artist sketching,' &c.!

Covered with confusion and blushes, she stood convicted. Far too generous to take undue advantage, Hilary immediately turned to the work on the easel, and after a few unmeaning words of criticism he said, 'You are going to send this drawing to the Academy?'

'If I get it finished in time,' she answered, reddening a little.

'O, you must; it would never do for "Corisande Brown" not to be represented.'

'I think you are very unkind, Mr. Hilary.'

'Do you, then, behave in a Christian spirit—return good for evil; be kind to me.'

He hardly knew what he was saying, but he was very conscious of the truth of the axiom, 'Faint heart,' &c., and this consciousness swept all before it. He turned towards her.

'I have guessed this, hoped this, all along; that is, that you, Corisande Brown, and the purchaser of my picture, were one and the same person. I have had an intuitive conviction of it, a presentiment, Miss Dacres.'

'I don't believe in presentiments,' she answered, avoiding his eyes and going to the door. 'Tea is waiting.'

'O, pray stop one moment; at least you believe in St. Valentine; you said so at the Academy.'

'I said nothing of the kind.'

'Ah, but you said the two pictures, our two pictures, would make a pair of Valentines, a "happy pair." Accept the omen, Miss Dacres; there must be something in it. Why, to-day is the anniversary—to-day is the 14th; St. Valentine again, as I live! It is fate; we cannot fly in the face of fate when it thus decrees us both a chance in the lottery, and assures me that, if I win, I at least must do so with a priceless prize! Say that I may hope; and if the devotion of a life have any influence, you shall admit that at least you have not drawn a blank.'

He had followed her to the door, and for one moment held her hand in his, and put it to his lips before she passed out, and led the way without a word to the drawing-room.

What need to detail the sequel to a scene like this? Clearly there could be but one. Ground thus broken, Frank Hilary's impetuous courage bore down all obstacles; and some months before the next anniversary of St. Valentine came round, the 'happy pair' were at work in the same studio.

'Corisande Brown' is still a frequent exhibitor. Frank often sits to her (he is very handsome), but she tells him he is by no means so steady a model as he was at that memorable time at Old Croyston.

'Ah, I did not know you were looking at me then,' he pleads, 'and, by the bye, you have never told me how it was you managed to elude my eagle eye; I was looking everywhere for you the two following days.'

'O, it was on the afternoon of St. Valentine's day that I made my sketch of you,' answered Mrs. Hilary. 'I wanted to finish my sketch, and I was returning through the wilderness from lunching with old Lady Belpert, when I caught sight of you in the distance, and I determined to try and have a peep at what you were doing; so I made a great round, and came upon you from the other side of the copse, where you never looked. Of course it was very wrong of me; but I got quite close, so close that I could see your drawing. To my surprise, I beheld you were touching up, not a drawing of Croyston Towers, but

a sketch of myself. I was piqued at your impertinence, and so, as you said afterwards, I took my revenge. I made a sketch of you, and crept away again, like the guilty creature that I was, in the gloom of the evening, without your once having had an idea of my presence. I was not near the place after that.'

'Well, all is fair in love and war,' answered Frank; 'we were both guilty creatures; it was tit for tat. You don't grumble, do you?'

'No, indeed,' answered his wife; 'for I feel that I, no less than you (as you say), have drawn a prize in St. Valentine's Lottery!'

THE ROMANCE OF OLD LONDON.

No. II.—THE WATER-GATE BY CANNON-STREET STATION.

Dowgate, adjoining Cannon-street Station, is one of the few words of British origin that have come down to our time. Dow is a corruption of *dier* (pr. *doore*), which is still Welsh for water. The great Roman way from the North of England reached to the Thames at Dowgate, where a bridge of boats united it with the Stoney Street, the southern way, still to be traced through Kent to the sea. Cannon-street railway-bridge spans the same track.

SHALLOW and broad the river flows
O'er its southern banks, among marsh and sedges;
Away to the north the yew-wood grows
From the far-off hills to the water's edges;
Half hid in the forest dark and dense
Are a few mud huts in a wattled fence.

A rushing brook,* from under the trees,
Down a pebbly bank runs into the river;
While its ripples, stirr'd by the evening breeze,
Make the yew-trees' shadows dance and quiver;
And a woad-stain'd Briton says to his mate,
'See, the brook has made us a Water-gate.'

* The Wall brook.

The armèd legions of conquering Rome
With their eagle-standards the stream are wading ;
With sword and with axe they make them a home
For their merchantmen and their country's trading ;
And the Roman galley rides in state
By the Briton's brook at the Water-gate.

Over the Thames to the Stoney Street
A bridge of boats with the tide is swaying ;
By the northern way comes a girl to greet
Her Roman lover, and chides his staying.
Long is his road, but he comes ere 'tis late
O'er the bridge to the girl at the Water-gate.

* * * * *

A busy town by the river lies,
And slowly grows with the growth of the nation ;
A people come who are skilful and wise,
And with cunning craft they rear them a station ;
With iron beams build it strong and great
By the side of the brook and the Water-gate.

The crafty builders so wise are grown,
Their swift words borrow the lightning to fly on ;
They have taken the Fire King from his throne,
And he draws their cars on a way of iron :
But the giant captive fights with his fate,
And pants and shrieks by the Water-gate.

Fuller and deeper the river flows
Past its narrow'd banks, among docks and dredges ;
The World's greatest City around it grows,
From the distant hills to the water's edges ;
And an iron roadway massive and straight
Joins Stoney Street to the Water-gate.

L. ALLDRIDGE.

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

SOCIETY AT THE WINTER WATERING-PLACES.

THE belt of our southern seaboard is visited every summer by the tourists and every winter by the invalids. Our Christmases have generally been mild, but the New Year has been ushered in with winds and storms. The invalid population, who have gone to the pretty watering-places sprinkled all along the coast from Hastings to Land's End, have received only a rude welcome and have partaken of alarming visitations. The waves have been dashing against their windows, and the boats have been plying in the streets. They have been perhaps regretting that they have not made the few days' railway journey that would take them to the Riviera, or the few days' sail that would bring them to Madeira. All along the coast, with a perfect unanimity, floods and storms have marked the coming of the New Year and the arrival of visitants, who in swallow-swarms flee to warmer skies on the advent of winter. But we cannot change our planet. Nowhere have air and ocean been more tumultuous than at Hastings and St. Leonards—the noble and united watering-place, which has such a great, deserved, and increasing reputation. I wish other watering-places would take example by Hastings, and introduce those glass-covered resting-places with cosy seats, which are such a comfort to delicate invalids. This is the last improvement in winter watering-places, but it has not extended much beyond Sussex. But even on the wildest days

on the south coast, when London ways are miry and horrible, there are gleams of sunshine; the strong winds sweep the pavement dry, and a walk, pleasant though brief, is attainable. I have mentioned Hastings almost by accident; but I think that to it belong the premier honours of watering-places. It has also the advantage of being easily accessible in every direction. Other new ones start up in the neighbourhood, but its rapid development outstrips them all. I observe that Mr. Brassey, its member, is wisely using some of his vast wealth in dowering his constituents with a new museum and library. I observe that the old *habitués* of the place have a constant programme. In the morning they go to the old town, and in the afternoon to the new town; they do their shopping, they climb the heights, they potter about on the beach watching boats and boatmen, and in the afternoon they take the St. Leonards direction. The pier is almost abandoned, but there is a never-failing promenade along Eversfield-place and the Marina.

Of all our winter health resorts the medical preëminence is justly due to Penzance. Torquay comes nearest in value through its protective screen of hills, but there are reasons for preferring Penzance to Torquay. Unlike Torquay, however, Penzance has its trade and shipping, and has failed to make itself a fashionable residence for valetudinarians. Pulmonary invalids, however, have never been slow in recognising its value. The town has not got the scenic loveli-

ness of Torquay nor the ready access to London, with numerous resources, by which Torquay makes itself acceptable to visitants. But it fronts the broad Atlantic. You might sail away to the Southern Pole without touching land. You get, what you do not get in Torbay, the full sweet influences of the Gulf Stream. Even in this month of January you find the wild-flowers in profusion. The ferns flourish all the year, and the tall geraniums touch your bedroom window. Opposite the beach you are on the granite. Higher up you get on the slate-chalk, which is to be avoided, for the invalid cannot remember too carefully that the soil and subsoil are as important for health as the climate. The temperature is that of Italy. Even Italians have come from home to Penzance for the sake of the climate. But the difference between Penzance and Naples is this: at Penzance you get one fine day to ten that are rainy; at Naples you get only one wet day out of ten. At Penzance there is regularly a flood of rains and waters. At other places you may get some angury of the weather from the direction of the wind. But be the wind east, west, north, or south, you have always rain at Penzance.

The place really does not do itself justice. It knows nothing of squares and stately terraces and pleasure-gardens. It does not lay itself out for invalids; it does not advertise its attractions as nearly every other watering-place does; it knows nothing of a pier or band or *établissement* of any kind; it does not even make the best of its natural advantages. The harbour at Penzance is not much of a harbour; but close by, at Newlyn, is a natural harbour, which with a slight expenditure might be able to enclose the whole navy of Eng-

land. An act was procured, but the time granted has been allowed to expire without any use of it having been made. There is no sanatorium, no cottage or convalescent hospital, such as in other towns have conferred inestimable blessings on the poor, and by a happy reciprocity have obtained advantages for themselves. *O fortunati nimium, bona si sua norint*, is a line which might exactly suit the people of Penzance. Penzance is just now best known as giving a member to Liskeard, and a title to the judge who has to deal with excessive ritual.

Penzance is the end of the railway system in England. Very slow is this Cornwall line; the train stops at every station, and is never allowed to exceed a very moderate speed. This alone is sufficient to deter many invalids, to whom a prolonged railway journey is a very serious consideration. The peculiar charm of the place is to our mind that the town does not consist of a consumptive population, but has all kinds of interests. Just inside the harbour is the little steamer which will take you away forty miles to the Scilly Isles. Mr. Freeman has of late been talking a great deal of the benevolent autocracy of the late Mr. Augustus Smith of the Scilly Isles; but I, who know them well, denounce his rule as a tyranny, and maintain that it did far more harm than good. Here are the Italian vessels which are loading with barrels of pilchard for Genoa and other ports on the Italian seaboard. The trains are running every day to London with the broccoli. Land lets for thirty or forty pounds an acre, and sends many tons of early vegetables daily to London. Then there are two bits of scenery which draw visitors from all lands in all weathers; these, of course, are St. Michael's Mount and the Land's

End. Sir John St. Aubyn is just now building an additional set of rooms in the old castle. Then it is to be said for Penzance that it has the most delicious library in the western country; I say this with a grateful recollection of the libraries of Truro and Plymouth and Exeter. Then there is an un-failing source of interest, if you can only understand their ways, in the mining and fishing population.

What are our invalids to do? Of course we are speaking of the more hopeful cases, which admit of patients getting out of doors. They do very much the same at all the southern watering-places. They watch eagerly for the transitory gleam of sunshine, then, well wrapped up, they go to the library, or they take a drive, or they walk along the esplanade. Sometimes they go to parties in the evening, in the closest of close carriages. A cheerful dinner-party is an admirable tonic for invalids. There is one cheerful-minded doctor who has prescribed 'the society of delightful young ladies.' Then there are the mild evening relaxations, which amuse without exciting. Then invalids have generally an *entourage* of friends and acquaintances who have always gaiety and society for themselves. At Torquay there are the daily drives and the evening balls. This is of course the case also with the large towns, such as Hastings, St. Leonards, and Bournemouth; but at such places as Ventnor, Salcombe, and Dawlish there seems to be a great dearth of healthy recreation. Invalids have always the comfort of comparing prescriptions and talking about their symptoms; and this is a much more serious matter than might be supposed. There is a thrill of happy congratulation when some poor tottering invalid has thrown away stick and wraps, and is rather

jauntily disporting himself on the sands. On the other hand, there is quite a thrill of regret when the whisper goes that the climate of such a place does not suit poor Jones, who must go to Algiers, or a longer journey still. Then there is a thrill of excitement because the great London physician has been called in specially to see some case, and it is odd if he has not got some kind wise word to say to some of his old patients whom he may encounter in their walk on the beach, which he is sure to take for his own behoof before he returns to town.

As we have spoken of our oldest watering-places, viz. Hastings and Penzance, we ought perhaps to say a word of the youngest—Bournemouth. The idea is that Bournemouth—so called from the little bourne or stream which prattles down to the beach—confers great benefit, like Arcachon, through the odour of its pine-groves. The prevailing presence of evergreens is both a mental and bodily refreshment, and some practitioners think that the resinous perfume has a distinct medical use. Socially speaking, one very noticeable feature is the entire absence of lodging-houses. There are no rows of houses, as in nearly every other watering-place, facing the sea, but every house is detached and in its own grounds. The result is that Bournemouth is of enormous extent for its population. Even business men are unbusiness-like; the population in general is lazy, owing to the Madeira climate and temperature. Still the different Church parties are able to display an enlivening animosity, and, as at Tunbridge Wells, Low Church will not call on High Church. Lord Chancellor Cairns has been staying at his magnificent new residence, Landisfarne, on the East Cliff; and I hope the great

lawyer has derived real benefit from the Channel breezes.

CHARLES KINGSLEY: A BRIEF
MONOGRAPH.*

It is more with Charles Kingsley than with Mrs. Kingsley's *Life of Charles Kingsley* that our few remarks will be concerned. The biography is in its way a very good one. It is replete with interest; there is hardly a page which one does not read with pleasure and instruction. It is enough to say that one half of the entire work is Charles Kingsley's own composition, mainly in the many letters which, with wonderful fullness and vehemence, he would throw off to almost any one who addressed an inquiry to him, when he thought the inquiry conceived in an honest spirit and to embrace an important issue. But the work, as is almost unavoidable, is beset with reticences. We should like, for instance, to have heard more about his brother and children. We may gradually gather up a portraiture of a great and good man, but the clearly-defined character is not at once set before us. In writing some few memorial words of a wonderful life, we shall not strictly limit ourselves to the volumes before us, but shall also use unpublished materials. We have had several good biographies of late, such as those of Ticknor and Macaulay; but we know of none which we think superior to this in the interest of the subject and the variety of contents.

What the public knew about Charles Kingsley was in inverse ratio to the matters on which he really concentrated himself. What the public knew best was the novel and the essay and the poem. His *Hypatia* was his best work, in his

* *Letters and Memoir of Charles Kingsley*. By his Widow. Two vols. (Henry S. King & Co.)

own judgment. He had studied his period thoroughly, and he said that, without vanity, he could have taught Gibbon a few things on that particular period. He always felt that his works did not do him justice; that they were merely pre-lusions for a greater work; that he could do something better than he had done. He lived liberally, in some ways expensively, and he wrote for money, which is hardly the most favourable circumstance for the cultivation of original powers. He used to vindicate the writing for money as if with a sort of feeling that it required vindication. But theology was his darling pursuit. He especially rejoiced in the Westminster canonry, because it promised to set him free from book-making to sermon-writing. He fully appreciated his position at Westminster, and threw his whole soul into it. But, properly speaking, each of his books was religious, not so much in dealing with religious subjects as dealing with secular subjects religiously. The successive volumes of sermons which he threw off were a great power in their way. They were worth to him the average income of a benefice. But what was nearest to his heart was their influence for good in the world. People who objected on principle to all sermons read Charles Kingsley's. In early days he was politically a Chartist, and theologically he had a natural affinity for heterodoxy and liberalism. But he eventually became something like a Tory, and was also perfectly orthodox. He would indulge sometimes in a vein of daring speculation; and Mr. Malcolm MacColl, in one of his books, says latterly he took up strongly the doctrine of Purgatory, which was odd for such a thorough anti-Romanist as he always professed to be. But his whole soul was

bent in doing good, and doing it in his own way. In a remarkable way he became all things to all men. To all outward seeming he was thoroughly a man of the world; all mere clericalism he simply abhorred; he knew society in all phases, thoroughly enjoyed life and fun, had 'a tidy knowledge of vintages,' and would make himself thoroughly at home with all sorts and conditions of men. But he never lost sight of the office of a priest and teacher. His appearances at Westminster Abbey were very striking, and indicated how intense was his eagerness in his work—an intensity which shortened his days.

The great business and effort of his life, of which we see the outcome in all he said or did, was that he himself, Charles Kingsley, should not be below the level of what he taught; he exercised himself to be without offence before God and man; he exemplified the lines which he wrote for his niece, Mrs. Theodore Waldron:

'Be good, and let who will be clever;
Do noble deeds, not dream them all
day long:
And so make life, death, and that vast for
ever,
One grand sweet song.'

What was very remarkable in the case of this imperious high-spirited man was his deep humility and self-abasement, in this way much resembling the late John Keble. Instances abound of his exercising the rarest generosity and kindness. We might give various little anecdotes respecting him supplementary to those which we find in these volumes. Perrot, the Dartmoor guide, was telling us of a day's fishing he had with him. Kingsley reckoned that Perrot and others had a better time of it than himself; he had so much money to earn and consequently so much work to do. The real holiday days for fishing were only so

many in the year. Two young ladies belated on Dartmoor, going into Prince's Town, were alarmed by the rapid strides of a man gaining fast upon them in the darkness. They quickened their pace, but were outstripped. 'Don't be afraid, young ladies,' exclaimed a stammering voice, 'I am a clergyman, and my name is Charles Kingsley, and I will take you safely home.' The great thing that struck you at once with Charles Kingsley was the eye. It was peculiarly restless and piercing. The rapid glance which he threw from his pulpit seemed in a moment to gather in every one before him. It was an eye which was unsatisfied with seeing. His love and knowledge of Nature were immense. He longed to be at the heart of everything. Night and day the active eyes and the keen intellect were busy. He was continually watching the starry heavens; he watched cloudland with a passionate love, and would say, using Luther's phrase, that to him the winged cloud was a living creature, with hands and feet. He gloried in garden and stream, and the firs of the heath. His lot being cast in a remote village, he knew that he must make his home either a prison or a paradise; he made it a paradise, and in early life he found his Eve. And his intense love reminds us of the great poetic affections made memorable in literature, such as those for Laura or Beatrice. But amid all the elements of rest and repose around him the man himself could not rest; it was not in him. When a man having finished his ordinary work would think of repose, Charles Kingsley would shake himself as a lion, gather all his energies together, and sit down to work which taxed them to the full.

He was a man who felt and expressed himself strongly. He had

tremendous likes and dislikes. He used to call Bulwer Lytton by the name of Mephistopheles. One of the greatest luminaries of the High Church party he denominated 'a wind-bag.' On the other hand he had an immense respect for John Henry Newman, the first dialectician of our age, who forensically worsted him by his *Apologia*. No thing, however, was more characteristic of Kingsley than his general fairness of mind, and his desire to do justice to all.

He loved to travel everywhere. His imagination was kindled by the thoughts of the gorgeous western world, and he went out to the beautiful islands which had furnished so much towards his English epical story, *Westward Ho!* Then, like many other English clergymen, he was strongly fascinated by the North Pacific Railway. He too must see the Rocky Mountains, and the Yosemite Valley, and the wonders of California. Wales and the western counties of England he knew thoroughly well. Lately we were staying at an inn in the heart of the Welsh mountains, which he has celebrated both in prose and verse, and where a whole cluster of traditions belongs to him.

And yet everywhere and at all times his true centre was in his parish and his home. However far he travelled, there was the silken chain which drew him homewards. He 'worked' Eversley, as a parson would say, thoroughly well. In addition to his two services he opened a school-chapel at Bremshill for afternoon service. When one of his books made a good profit, the first thing he did was to raise the stipend of his curate. While residing at Eversley he had also to find a home, first at Cambridge, then at Chester, then at Westminster. His Cambridge work, which cost him the hardest labour,

was the least satisfactory. With Nature, human nature, and religion he was thoroughly familiar; but he was unaccustomed, except in the rare instance of *Hyppatia*, to deal with the phenomena of history, and he had some idea, hardly very intelligible either to himself or others, of applying scientific laws to the facts of history. He was a popular lecturer at Cambridge, and filled his class-room. The only occasion on which we ever saw him on the platform was at the Southampton Church Congress. He then spoke of 'his boys' at Cambridge, a term which he was very fond of applying to them. He had a curious sinuous motion of the body, the movement was quite serpentine, when he made a speech, and his stammering, which often gave him great trouble, appeared on such occasions entirely to vanish. But wherever Kingsley went he left the full impress of his character. You should talk to the Chester people about him. There have been few men with such an *entourage* of friends, from the Queen and the Prince to the Hampshire ditcher and delver. Those who knew least of him as a great and famous man loved him for his goodness and sympathy. He himself was greater than any of his books; and his life may be studied, and in very much copied, as the best book of all.

A LOVER OF NATURE.

A MOST interesting work is Mr. Smiles's *Life of a Naturalist*.* Mr. Smiles has in his *Self-help* mentioned the extraordinary artisan of Banff. The Linnean Society had made him an Associate; and by various learned societies full evidence had been given of the scientific value of his investigations. But Banff only gave him

* *Life of a Naturalist*. By Samuel Smiles. (Murray.)

the curatorship of its Museum, worth some five pounds a year, and the prophet, using the word in the old sense of teacher, was entirely without honour in his own country. It is seldom, indeed, that a man's life is written while he is still alive, but in his case there was abundant reason. It has also resulted in abundant good. A number of noblemen and gentlemen formed a committee to raise funds for his declining days; and the Queen, through Lord Beaconsfield, promptly conferred a well-deserved pension. The interesting circumstances belonging to the publication of the work should not, however, divert attention from the marvellous story told in the work itself.

Edwards was only a child in arms when he nearly lost his life by a leap to catch an insect. All the remainder of his days was destined to be a continuation of this strange impulse. At the time of this occurrence he was four months old. His love of all animal life grew with his growth. When at school his behaviour was not less unaccountable; frogs, tadpoles, beetles, spiders, horse-leeches, and even snakes—anything living that he could obtain—were collected and carefully treasured up; but as he was generally unsuccessful in keeping his little friends captive, and as the people about him were unable to appreciate the peculiarity of his taste, he managed to get into sad disgrace: a centipede on a schoolmaster's arm or a wasps' nest taken home in secrecy was sufficient to bring down upon him the wrath of both tutor and parent. But it was of no avail: the love of all that Nature produced was in him, and could not be knocked out.

He went to work at the early age of six, and at eleven was duly apprenticed to a shoemaker, at the high wages of eighteenpence a

week, and though fifty-one years have since passed he still 'sticks to his last.' The restraints of his apprenticeship were too much for him: his master was a drunken dissolute fellow; and although Mr. Smiles tells us that 'shoemakers are usually very fond of pets,' this man seems to have had a very strong aversion not only to pets, but to all who cared for them; the consequence of which was that Edward, having been found one day playing with a sparrow, and having on another occasion surreptitiously hidden away three moles, was violently ejected from his master's house. He never returned to it. At eighteen he joined the Aberdeenshire militia, and at this age we might at least expect him to be conducting himself rationally; but one day, in the midst of drill, a fine butterfly flew past; the temptation was too great, Edward was in pursuit at once. He was shortly, however, overtaken by the corporal, and the following colloquy took place: 'What's up, Edward?' 'Nothing.' 'The deuce!' 'No, it wasn't that; it was a splendid butterfly.' 'A butterdevil!' 'No, it was a butterfly.' 'Stuff!' said the corporal, 'are you mad?' And having satisfied himself that such was probably the case, the corporal led him to the guard-house. On the way, an officer accompanied by some ladies happened to pass, and on hearing the nature of the offence the ladies interceded on poor Edward's behalf, and he was set at liberty.

At the age of twenty he married a good wife, and he then began a series of nocturnal excursions in search of natural curiosities. His hours of work were from six in the morning till nine at night, so that he had little time to spare for science; but he would start out late at night with his gun and his wallet, sleep frequently in the open

air, and return home for his work.

When he had been married about eight years he found he had accumulated a very large number of specimens of the flora and fauna of his neighbourhood, and he now determined to exhibit the collection at a fair in Banff. The experiment being moderately successful, he arranged for an exhibition in Aberdeen; this he opened in the following year, but it was a failure; few came, and the expenses of it soon ran him hopelessly in debt. In his despair his faith and hope seemed to give way, and he was on the point of committing suicide. Some remarkable natural appearances arrested his attention and caused him to give up the design. There was nothing for it but to part with everything he possessed and begin the world again, under circumstances of discredit and discouragement. Those late hours and nocturnal wanderings ruined his health; but knowledge throughout was its own exceeding great reward, and ample honour and recognition have come to crown the evening of his days.

HUMOROUS ART.

THE eighth volume of *Vanity Fair* merits a special place in a section like this. It may fairly claim, as it does in the preface, that this volume is in some respects superior to any of its predecessors. Good John Bunyan doubtless did not dream of these younger artists when he sketched the wonderful original of the Fair from which Thackeray and Jehu Junior have alike drawn inspiration.

Vanity Fair certainly maintains that exquisite *chic* (to use the handy elastic French word) which won the peculiar position it holds. The volume must be a refreshing annual to the 'governing English-

man' in our colonies and dependencies, far removed from the delights of 'The Row' and Clubland.

Laughable Lyrics: a Fourth Book of Nonsense, Poems, Songs, Botany, Music, &c., by Edward Lear (R. J. Bush, Charing-cross). It is just thirty years since Mr. Lear published his *First Book of Nonsense*. His hand has not lost its cunning. No one who has seen any of the three earlier series is likely to be content without the fourth. The strange, weird, bizarre rhymes and pictures have a spell all their own. 'The Dong with a luminous Nose' and 'The Pobble who has no Toes'—what are they? with what can you compare them? They seem like shadows of a dream, or echoes from some other far-off sphere of existence. But you 'chortle' while you read the droll jingle, and examine the humorous pre-Raphaelite pictures. *They are rhymes which haunt you. Listen to the tale of*

'THE QUANGLE WANGLE'S HAT.'

I.

On the top of the Crumppetty Tree
The Quangle Wangle sat;
But his face you could not see,
On account of his Beaver Hat.
For his Hat was a hundred and two feet
wide,
With ribbons and bibbons on every side,
And bells and buttons and loops and
lace,
So that nobody ever could see the face
Of the Quangle Wangle Quee.

II.

The Quangle Wangle said
To himself on the Crumppetty Tree,—
"Jam; and jelly; and bread;
Are the best of food for me!
But the longer I live on this Crumppetty
Tree,
The plainer than ever it seems to me
That very few people come this way,
And that life on the whole is far from
gay!"
Said the Quangle Wangle Quee.

III.

But there came to the Crumppetty Tree
Mr. and Mrs. Canary;
And they said,—“Did ever you see
Any spot so charmingly airy?”

May we build a nest on your lovely Hat?
Mr. Quangle Wangle, grant us that.
O, please let us come and build a nest,
Of whatever material suits you best,
Mr. Quangle Wangle Quee."

IV.

And besides, to the Crumpetty Tree
Came the Stork, the Duck, and the
Owl,
The Snail and the Bumble-Bee,
The Frog and the Fimble Fowl
(The Fimble Fowl with a Corkscrew leg);
And all of them said,—“We humbly beg,
We may build our homes on your lovely
Hat,—
Mr. Quangle Wangle; grant us that!
Mr. Quangle Wangle Quee."

V.

And the Golden Grouse came there,—
And the Pobble, who has no toes,—
And the small Olympian Bear,—
And the Dong with a luminous nose,
And the Blue Baboon, who play'd the
flute,—
And the Orient Calf from the land of
Tute,—
And the Attery Squash, and the Bisky
Bat,—
All came and built on the lovely Hat
Of the Quangle Wangle Quee.

VI.

And the Quangle Wangle said
To himself on the Crumpetty Tree,—
“When all these creatures move,
What a wonderful noise there'll be!”
And at night, by the light of the Mul-
berry Moon,
They danced to the Flute of the Blue
Baboon,
On the broad green leaves of the Crum-
petty Tree;
And all were as happy as happy could
be,
With the Quangle Wangle Quee."

The Public and Private Life of Animals (Sampson Low & Co.) is a curious and suggestive book. In these pictures and adaptations from the French of Balzac, Droz, Jules Janin, E. Lemoine, Alfred de Musset, Georges Sand, &c., Mr. J. Thomson introduces us to a style of illustration of which Ernest Griset has been hitherto the chief interpreter to English eyes. Opinions will vary as to the value of the text. To some it will appear flat, to others far-fetched in parts. But there is a wealth of imagination in this

richly-illustrated volume, which deserves to give it a permanent place, not only on the book-shelves of the young folk, but of all who can relish the quaint conceit underlying the idea of ‘Animals, painted by themselves.’ If smoking-rooms have libraries,—and why should they not?—this book is one of the right sort for such a place.

Johnnykin and the Goblins, by Charles G. Leland (Macmillan & Co.). If Alice had never visited ‘Wonderland,’ certain other goblins would never have been seen on this earth. But this little volume, with its quaint original illustrations by the author, is well worthy of a place in the choice Juvenile Library which Messrs. Macmillan have made famous.

How Johnnykin talked with the Stone Image, how he sang with an Owl, what he saw in Goblinland, and how he *did* see Willie Winkie one day, will charm many little bright eyes. Amongst the pictures we are specially arrested by ‘The Bird’s Eye,’ ‘The Bird of Wisdom,’ ‘The Bogey,’ ‘The Rush Fairies,’ ‘The Dreadful Stupids,’ and ‘The Goblin Spelling Bee.’ We give the rhyme which tells us that when one finds a very perfect little pebble a fairy is present:

‘I.

Down in the pond where fishes dive
Are little green fairies all alive;
There they swim and there they creep,
Down in the water ever so deep.

II.

There never were people half so neat;
They scrub the rocks with hands and
feet;
They polish the stones wherever they’re
found,
And that’s what makes the pebbles so
round.

III.

And when you walk by the water bright,
And find a pebble round and white,
You may see for yourself what fairies do,
Who placed it there as a ‘present for
you.’

ART AND SCIENCE.

Two enjoyable houses open their doors during the break which comes between Boxing-day and that meeting of Parliament 'for despatch of business' which brings with it 'the season.' These houses are the Royal Academy, with its Winter Exhibition of Old Masters, and the Royal Institution, with its interesting 'Friday Evenings before Easter.'

The Winter Exhibition is now happily such an assured success that the doubts and fears which attended its start are fairly dismissed. The loan of examples from the vast art treasures of England is becoming more easily obtainable, whilst the growing interest of the public is a gratifying proof of the soundness of the idea and of the existence of a real interest in Art—a thing which some cynical students of the gay May crowd affect to doubt.

This year's Exhibition is extremely good, both in variety and in the excellence of the examples. No visitor to the metropolis should omit a quiet forenoon saunter through these noble galleries. The lover of English Art will have an opportunity of seeing fine pictures by masters of whom he has heard much, but seen little; and those who are familiar with the great collections of Europe will be able to dwell at leisure on many gems which they have hitherto eyed at a distance through the pages of 'Waagen.' A noticeable feature this year is the numerous examples of Raeburn, the great Scottish portrait-painter, to whom we recently directed attention.

The first 'Friday evening' at the Royal Institution (on January 19) brought Professor Tyndall to the front again, with a continuation of

the experiments which he explained last year on the profoundly interesting and 'burning' question of 'Spontaneous Generation.' We are here face to face with the great problem of the origin of life, with the doctrines of evolution, and the opposing schools of physical experimenters and biologists.

The lecture was entitled 'A Combat with an Infective Atmosphere.' It brought before the large and intellectual audience assembled to hear it the results of a series of elaborate experiments, and also the apparatus employed in conducting them. To put it shortly, as we must do here, the object was to ascertain the development or non-development of the lower organisms in a thoroughly moteless atmosphere. The earlier results were curiously oscillating and contradictory. De Quincey defined a paradox as a veiled truth; so Professor Tyndall, pondering the puzzle before him, fell back on the truth and constancy of Nature and suspected a flaw in his processes, careful as they had been. A gradually increasing severity of experiment conducted in the pure air at Kew—away from the vitiated atmosphere of the Royal Institution—led to uniform and remarkable results, which it is beyond the scope of these notes to detail. As a physical experiment the crowning process, for the exclusion of all air from the test infusions exhibited at the lecture, was remarkably beautiful. So far well, but we stand on the very threshold still of a far deeper inquiry. How far will science yet be able to grapple with the profound and shifting problem?

In the coming weeks Sir John Lubbock, Professor Huxley, Professor Gladstone, and others will contribute to these interesting evenings.

THE RIGHT CHORD AT LAST.

A Valentine for the Harp.

‘FORCE the boom and the brunt of battle
From the anguish of straining cords;
The trailing of guns and the rattle,
And the clash and the clatter of swords.
Give wings to the vanquished and flying;
With the spur let the victor be sped;
Deal drouth and despair to the dying—
Deal the desolate dirge for the dead.

Force the crashing of bells and the clamour
Flaunt the flutter of flags o’er the files,
With the pious pride and the glamour
Of war in cathedral aisles.
Let the accents of heroes falter,
And perish in thunders of praise;
Speed the blessing of shrift from the altar,
And the prayer of the requiem raise.

Collect now the chiefs of the nations
Where the standards of strife are furl’d;
Yea, summon the far federations
Of the strength and the law of the world.
Let the lisping child lead the lion,
And couple the last with the steer;
Call the dolphin to succour Arion;
Bid the ravens sustain the seer.

Sing the friendship of earth and of heaven,
The concourse of ocean and sky;
Sing of chaos forgot and forgiven,
And of forces in harmony.
Sing the sameness of will and of duty,
Of might and of justice at one;
Sing of Art as the priestess of Beauty—
Alas! who may sing of thine own?

Thus whispered my tongue to a maiden,
As I worshipping stood by her side,
Whose lips that with music were laden
And fate-weaving fingers replied.
Yet was my heart discontented,
Till at length, all my fortune to prove,
That ask’d, and she sweetly consented
Harp and voice to attune to my love.



THE RIGHT CHORD AT LAST:
A VALENTINE FOR THE HARP.

